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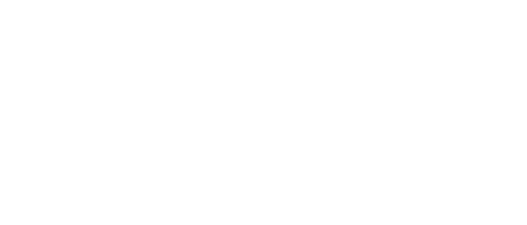
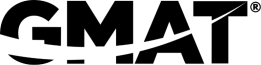
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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

The Most Authoritative Guide Ever Written on



Reading



ComprehensionSandeep Gupta

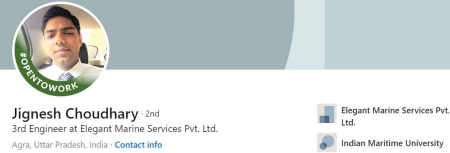
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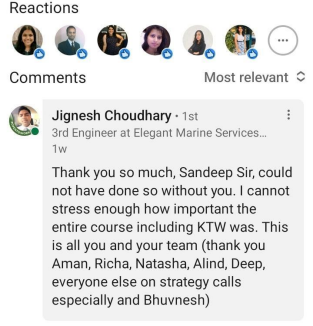
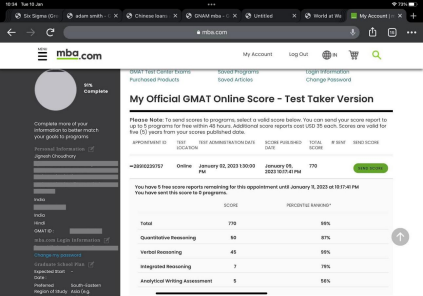
THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION 

Soham’s Interview: https://youtu.be/yMMoKcX\_Ni8 (Must watch)

Another recent success story, Jignesh Choudhary, who recently scored a 770, says the same thing about the program **KTW**.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION 

Jignesh’s Interview: https://youtu.be/ceob0-XDXdk (Must watch)

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION The Most Authoritative Guide Ever Written on



Reading 

ComprehensionLet’s get started …

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Reading Comprehension**

Welcome to the 

most DREADED

section on the

GMAT!

✓ **RC:** the single most important section on the GMAT that will decide *whether you will score above 700 or below 700*. PERIOD!

✓ Almost every GMAT aspirant finds RC to be the *make-or-break* for a 700+ score. ✓ This is the section that checks your nerves to the hilt: concentration, pacing, stamina, mental toughness, whether you go blank or can focus when nothing is registering in your mind (or when your brain refuses to understand anything, when the clock is ticking, when the stakes are as high as they are on the real GMAT).

✓ For whatever reason, if you can’t understand a passage during the exam, you are likely to get 3 or 4 (consecutive) questions wrong. And, as you (most probably) already know, the GMAT penalizes consecutive errors way more severely than spread-far-apart mistakes. **If you have 3-4 consecutive mistakes, your ‘current’ score drops by 60-80 points.** Imagine losing 2 passages in this fashion! Your ‘current’ 750 may drop to ‘actual’ 610 just because of two RC passages.

✓ Even at the cost of sounding dramatic, I will say this: **one RC passage can mean the difference between you being an MBA and you not being an MBA.**

✓ I have personally interacted with more than **61,000** students who had to drop their MBA plans only because they couldn’t crack JUST ONE RC PASSAGE!

✓ **The biggest tragedy**: no institute, trainer, or GMAT-Prep Company has any workable method for RC at all—the method that **actually WORKS** on the test day! So, they devote a mere 5% to teaching RC. RC is a formality that they think they have to cover, just for namesake.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION ✓ No one—absolutely no one—seems to have a workable strategy for RC. You are told all kinds of things that don’t work on the test day. Here are some pieces of junk you may have already heard / read about RC:

o Read the questions first, then read the passage

o Take brief notes—**the worst advice of it all**

o Make a skeletal map of the passage

o (Mentally) pause and summarize, after each para

o Speed-read

o Scan

o Skip

o Skim

o Read, read, read … newspapers, novels, books, magazines, articles, NY Times, Economist … o Think of Topic, Purpose, and Scope of the passage while reading

o Read the first and last lines of each para

o Mainly read the first line and the last line of the passage

o Rely on your notes for specific questions

o To manage time well, leave one passage altogether (just blind-guess and move on)

**Trust me**! None of the above so-called “techniques” will work on the test day. NONE AT ALL! ✓ Some trainers select a few passages on which their so-called ‘technique’ works; obviously the ‘gimmick’ doesn’t work on the rest of the official passages / in the actual exam. But by the time the student figures this out, the classes are over; these trainers cover just one or two RC passages (as a formality) for one-half of a session at the very end.

✓ **Truth be told**! As a student and as a GMAT aspirant, I never struggled with Grammar, Vocabulary, and Math. By the age of 14, I had developed enough Quant skills to be able to clear International Math Olympiad, had read more than 250 books on grammar, and had remembered the entire Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary.

**BUT** I struggled a lot with RC and CR. A LOT!

✓ My painful journey with RC and CR started way back in time. It took me six years of superhuman effort (more than 10,000 hours, for sure) to improve my RC and CR. It will not be wrong to say that improving RC and CR became my life’s sole mission for six full years. And I can confidently say that eventually I fully mastered all the skills needed to crack RC and CR at the highest level (not a single mistake in any RC / CR questions on the GMAT, GRE, and LSAT).

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✓ **But I wasn’t satisfied**. For the teacher in me, the bigger question still remained unresolved: *How to teach RC*?

✓ Deeply frustrated by this inability, I went back to the drawing board, trying to analyze my own mind as to how I actually solved an RC passage. I wanted my unexplainable subconscious “intuition” that worked only for me to become a repeatable, conquerable “process” that worked for all of my students. I wanted to give my students a formula, a technique, a blueprint—something they could instantly learn and apply! It took me more than 2 years of relentless effort to crystallize my learnings in the form of a neat formula.

✓ And, I can proudly say that, eventually, I eventually did have a system in place: OCTAAVE—an approach that, if applied correctly over 250 (minimum number) real-GMAT passages (exactly as I ask you to apply), can, in less than a month, make you ace RC with absolutely 100 percent accuracy. Thousands of my 99th percentiler students have, untiringly, attested to the efficacy of OCTAAVE, raving about the result they got using the same approach. **The technique ACTUALLY WORKED for them on the test day**.

https://youtu.be/3a5MQ8SCscM Listen to Smita Pathak, who recently got a 100% accuracy in the RC Section. This one interview will prepare you more for the GMAT than my own techniques / teaching.

https://youtu.be/l7X9989zg5g **–** Smita on **Awareness / KTW Videos –** absolute must watch

✓ So, with the OCTAAVE tool in your hand, you will never have to go through the trauma, the agony, and the heartache that I had to go through for years; OCTAAVE can give you the same level of mastery (as I have) in less than a month. This is an absolute promise!

o How I came up with ACT (Assumption Centrality Technique) in CR is another story (for another time), but I want to assure you: once you nail ACT, you will never struggle with CR.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION ✓ **One important thing**: the two different types of questions asked in RC (*Stated* idea and *Inferred* idea) test totally different skills, and your being good at one skill doesn’t guarantee your being good at the other.

o In the same way, the two different types of questions asked in CR (*Analyze / Critique* and *Construction / Plan*) test totally different skills, and your being good at one doesn’t guarantee your being good at the other skill.

✓ Please refer to a few screenshots of the ESRs of a few students who contacted me after doing badly in their earlier attempt(s) to understand the point I just made above.



With all this information in your kitty, let’s dive in!

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **O.C.T.A.A.V.E.**

A guaranteed formula for 100% success in GMAT RC

***Note***: OCTAAVE is an application tool, not some concept that you can learn and hope to improve your RC skills (with just the theory). To this effect, just the written word can’t do justice to the application of OCTAAVE. You must watch me in action in my live online classes or in pre-recorded videos to understand the application of the technique thoroughly.

For this precise reason, the contents of this book are to be used as accompaniments with my classes, not as standalone training materials.

***The building blocks of RC***:

An RC passage presents a formal piece of writing. Any formal piece of writing is very different from a normal conversation, general chit-chat, YouTube comments, WhatsApp shares, Facebook posts, Instagram updates, Twitter jargon and the like.

So, what distinguishes a formal piece of writing from all the other “junk”?

**Simple!** a formal piece of writing has a PURPOSE. No wonder almost every single RC passage has a question called *Primary Purpose* of the passage. Otherwise, how many times do you end up thinking what the primary purpose of a random WhatsApp group-message is?

So, what could be the purpose of a passage?

Well, an RC passage can have the following purposes (the list is indicative, not exhaustive): 1. To express an opinion, a point of view or a position

2. To argue for a conclusion by giving facts in support of the conclusion

3. To suggest something / to make a case for something / to recommend something 4. To prescribe something (the author wants the reader to accept a conclusion or accept his / her rejection of a conclusion)

5. To predict something

6. To express a sentiment (optimism, pessimism etc.)

7. To present a hypothesis and offer some support for the hypothesis

8. To support an idea (viewpoint / hypothesis / claim / position)

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION 9. To challenge an idea (viewpoint / hypothesis / claim / position)

10.To evaluate something (good and bad points, desirable and undesirable qualities, pros and cons, pluses and minuses, advantages and shortcomings) without giving any suggestion / prescription 11. To present, or speculate on, the causes of something

12. To present a new / novel interpretation of something

13. To comment on someone else’s interpretation of something

14. To inform the reader of some new development OR of any established scientific, historical, and / or other facts without any argument / conclusion / opinion

15. To report / narrate two sides of a debate … OR to report research findings, artistic accomplishments, innovations, established facts, or a sequence of events

16. To comment on the work of another author, researcher, scholar, historian, scientist, theorist, critic etc.

17. To describe the appearance, nature, or characteristics of something: a place, a society, artistic work, device, or invention

18. To criticize something by listing its shortcomings

19. To praise something by listing its appreciable qualities

20.To express a puzzling phenomenon and offer possible attempts at its resolution *And so on …*

The *primary purpose* of a passage can be broadly of two types:

• When the author expresses no personal *opinion* (50% of the passages, roughly) • When the author expresses some personal *opinion* (50% of the passages, roughly)

To this effect, your first task in RC is to find the personal opinion of the author or of those people whom the author supports. So, the first letter **O** in **O**CTAAVE stands for **opinion**. Let’s understand **O**pinion in some detail:

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Opinion**:

✓ As the first step in RC, you must try to find the **opinion** (personal opinion) of the author or of the people whom the author supports.

o The opinions that are just mentioned in the passage but are not supported by the author don’t count in this scenario.

✓ The author of a passage will have either no opinion or some tangible opinion. ✓ If the author has an opinion, s/he may have a strong opinion or a mild opinion. ✓ **BUT** the author can’t have wavering | changing | uncertain | ambivalent opinions. ✓ Opinions can be challenged. Opinions can be supported, as well.

✓ On the contrary FACTS can’t be challenged. Facts can’t be supported, either.

***What constitutes an opinion?***

**Ans.** Future | Feeling | Uncertainty | Debatability | Challengeability

• Prediction … (may | might | could | will | would | likely etc.) – FUTURE

• Suggestion … (should | propose | recommend | make a case for | ‘would need to do’ | would be wise to follow etc. | must | ought to etc.) – FEELING / FUTURE

• Position | stand | stance | viewpoint | belief – FEELING / DEBATABILITY

• Criticism and praise | Agreement and disagreement – FEELING

• Conclusion drawn | Judgment reached | Hypothesis | Claim – DEBATABILITY / UNCERTAINTY

***Please remember***:

• The answer to the **primary purpose** and **main idea** of a passage is almost a restatement of the opinion of the passage.

• The first verb in a primary purpose question belongs to the author (explained in a subsequent video).

• If the author has a personal opinion, it is bound to the primary purpose of the passage. If not, the primary purpose is most likely going to be found at the Key Contradiction Location. I repeat: the most likely location for the Primary purpose of a passage is: **Contradiction** or the ***KEY Contradiction Location***.

To this effect, the second letter (C) in the O**C**TAAVE formula stands for **C**ontradiction (key contradiction location).

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Contradiction** Words: Watch out for contradiction words: these are important because the opinion might change or might be introduced at a contradiction location. Also, a lot of times, there is a general | inference question from these locations. The common contradiction words are:

*Alternatively, although, apart from,* ***but****, by contrast, contrary to, conversely, despite, even though,* ***however****, in contrast, in spite of this, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, on the other hand, regardless, still, then again,* ***yet***

**The VOICE of a passage**

A formal piece of writing (such as an RC passage) has a distinctive *voice*, called the TONE of the passage. The tone is that intangible *sentiment* that cuts across the entire passage as one unified theme, as one unified mood. It is the glue that binds the passage as one unified whole.

**Tone**: Always try to predict the tone of the passage as positive | negative | neutral | balanced. This is a big help.

✓ **Positive**: Praise | Optimism

✓ **Negative**: Criticism | Pessimism

o In a criticism passage, always ask: whether it is criticism only or also a suggestion. In many cases there is no suggestion in such passages. This can save a lot of time while marking the correct answers. In some cases, where there are both criticism and suggestion, the **suggestion** must be part of the correct answer choice in primary purpose / main idea type question. The criticism isn’t the crux in such cases.

✓ **Neutral**: The tone is neither positive (no praise) nor negative (no criticism). Think of neutral tone as **NEWS** (as news should ideally be)

✓ **Balanced**: Both positives and negatives of a situation are discussed. It is essentially ‘pros-and-cons’ analysis. An implied opinion is always there in such a passage even if there is no explicit opinion. o If the tone is balanced, one of the three words will surely be part of the correct answer choice: ***Assess*** or ***Critique*** or ***Evaluate*** (**ACE**)

✓ Think of neutral tone as **NEWS** and balanced tone as **REVIEWS**.

✓ If the tone is positive or negative or balanced, the author must have a personal opinion, howsoever subtle. BUT, if the tone is neutral, the author may or may not have a personal opinion.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION o Imagine this: if a passage has the opinion “The company should spend more on latest technology.” … This suggestion is clearly an opinion, but the tone is still neutral. o So even if the passage has an opinion, the tone can be neutral.

o On the other hand, if the author has no opinion, the tone must be neutral. o Imagine this: “Five of my friends like the US foreign policy, but five of my friends hate the US foreign policy.” The tone must be neutral here. In the same way, ‘Historians say *this*, but the scholars say *that* …” The tone is neutral here … because the author doesn’t have a personal opinion in each of these cases.

o On the other hand, imagine this: “These are things that are right about the US foreign policy, but these are things that are wrong about the US foreign policy.” The author clearly has an opinion here. And hence, the tone is balanced here: pros-and-cons analysis / pluses-and minuses analysis … always means a balanced tone. In the balanced tone scenario, the pluses and minuses will be about the same thing (the US foreign policy, in this case).

o Even if there is one plus and ten minuses (or vice versa), the tone is still balanced. We don’t need equal number of pluses and minuses.

o If the author doesn’t have a personal opinion, the tone is neutral (remember the opinion must be author’s personal opinion, not anyone else’s)

o The tone of the author doesn’t change midway through the passage. For example, if the author is pessimistic about something, s/he will remain pessimistic throughout. Refer to the explanation of the **Javan Rhino** passage to understand this further.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION *Some* ***tricky words*** *that can completely change the TONE of a passage:*

**Little:** It means hardly any, no, or none … and hence it has a negative meaning. For example: ✓ There is **little** hope of our team's victory now. Means NO hope or hardly any hope. ✓ He showed **little** concern for his niece. Means NO concern or hardly any concern. ✓ He showed **little** interest in Chemistry. Means NO interest or hardly any interest. ✓ Obama's presidency had **little** impact in countering the economic crisis in the USA, which continued

to worsen for a much longer duration. Means NO impact or hardly any impact. **A little:** It means some or somewhat … and hence it has positive meaning. For example: ✓ **A little** planning could have saved us from the disaster. Means some planning. ✓ There is **a little** hope of his recovery from the disease. Means some hope.

**Few:** It means hardly any or no one. Therefore, it has negative meaning. For example: ✓ **Few** people speak the truth today. Means NO ONE or hardly any

✓ **Few** people can keep a secret. Means NO ONE or hardly any

✓ **Few** people can doubt Dr. Sam’s credibility. (Means NO ONE or hardly any) **A Few:** It means ‘some’ as opposed to ‘none’, and hence it has positive meaning. For Example: ✓ **A few** words spoken politely will convince the boss. Means some words

✓ **A few** people have responded to the call for charity. Means some people

**Critique:** doesn’t mean criticize. It simply means to weigh the pros and cons of something. A movie *critic* (n – the person) who *critiques* (v – the action) a movie can give a five-star or one-star reviews both. Whatever the critic presents [a text / a video etc.] is called the *critique* (n)

*Some other words that can cause confusion are:*

✓ **Dispassionate** means unbiased, objective, impartial, scientific, neutral

✓ **Disinterested** means unbiased, objective, impartial, scientific, neutral

✓ **Qualify** means to limit something, to express reservations (e.g., to qualify one’s comments with some caution, to qualify one’s support towards something)

✓ **Qualified** means limited, with some reservations, not entirely, not complete ✓ **Unqualified** means complete, total, full, without any conditions

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **A general challenge** faced by almost everyone: unfamiliarity with the topics / contents of the passages.

Most of the GMAT RC passages deal with topics / contents that may be totally unknown to non-American GMAT-takers (watch Smita’s videos above, in which she talks about how she constantly kept on failing on “**Earthquake**” passages). This proves to be an extraordinary hurdle to quick and easy understanding. For example, if you don’t have any context about Feminism in 19th Century America, property rights before and after the US Civil War, the retentionist versus the abolitionist debate about Slavery in the US, prominent Supreme Court cases in the US, various ethnic groups in the US and the difficulties faced by them while assimilating with the American culture, Native Americans and the treatment meted out to them by the European Whites, **Capitalism – the most favorite topic** versus Socialism (as philosophies), challenges to religion in the US … These topics are most likely to be unknown to non-Americans but fully known to Americans, so, as a nonnative GMAT taker, unless you shore up your knowledge base about these topics, you are bound to be at a disadvantage vis-à-vis your American counterparts (American GMAT-takers).

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION To this effect, the next really important element in the OCT**A**AVE formula is: **Awareness**.

As mentioned above, many times (especially if you are a non-native GMAT aspirant), understanding a passage can be extremely challenging as you may not be aware of the background story / information / topic presented in the passage. **Awareness** stands for background information. If you already know the background information related to a new passage, your task becomes really simple. In my signature program

**Know The World** In 77 Hours

(This program has been attended by more than 307,000 MBAs / MBA aspirants globally)

… this issue is taken care of in extreme detail. In the past, students from Harvard, Wharton, Stanford, Booth, Kellogg, Columbia, MIT, LBS, INSEAD, ISB, and IIMs have traveled other countries to attend this program. Check this link for what the past attendees say about this program (**MUST WATCH FULLY**):

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Your Life’s Biggest Gift … EVER!**

… can’t buy it even with millions of dollars in your pocket.

Before reading any further, please watch these five short videos … these five videos can change your life … completely!

Video 1: https://youtu.be/h0VJHS4cTAU

Video 2: https://youtu.be/fMnrDgJ77BU

Video 3: https://youtu.be/7HXIW7i7hmg

Video 4: https://youtu.be/hbNceVnRMlQ

Video 5: https://youtu.be/LbHMOPjNE0I

Don’t skip even one second from the five videos above. NOT EVEN A SECOND!

The videos of this **77-Hour Program** are shared with you (**20 videos** – 3 videos called RC Awareness Videos, 11 Videos called KTW videos Series 1, 4 Videos called KTW videos Series 2, and 2 videos called KTW Series 3) … at no extra cost.

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**Before you start watching the KTW videos**, you must check the PDF (KTW Impact Stories) and the Video.

**Know Your Instructor:**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Tv17aF58sCb9 Lbh3g1NvibIY3nIVE-Sz?usp=share\_link

Do check the files 0, 1, 2, and 3 fully (FULLY) before you start watching the KTW videos from file 4 here.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Predominant RC topics**

✓ Biological Evolution | Human Behavior shaped by biological evolution

✓ Brain Science (evolution of the human brain and how it affects human behavior) ✓ Animal kingdom

✓ Biology – cell structure etc.

✓ American History, American Independence, US Civil War

✓ American Economy, Finance, Capital Markets

✓ Challenges to religion

✓ American domination – various aspects, major events

✓ Capitalism, Communism, Socialism, Democracy, the Cold War

✓ Various groups in America: minorities, women, feminism, Blacks, Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics

✓ Popular Supreme Court cases

✓ Science, especially biology and astronomy | Latest technology

\*\*\*\*\*

So far, all the components of OCTAAVE have been related to the passage. Opinion / Contradiction / Tone / Awareness … all relate to the passage.

**There are three components, however,** that are related to the question and the options.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION The next component **A** in OCTA**A**VE (Avoid)

**Avoid:** in the answer choices, you must be extremely cautious of (largely avoid): ✓ **Superlatives** (the third degrees of adjectives): best, latest, most, worst etc. Unless given verbatim, these answers are almost always wrong.

✓ **Specific to general** (if the passage mentions something specific, the choices that generalize that information are almost always wrong).

o Let’s say, the passage talks about lions, then it will be wrong to mark an answer that generalizes lions to mammals or animals etc.

o If the passage is about a recent immigrant’s first experience of America, the exam will widen the scope of an answer choice to include all immigrants.

o If the passage is about the existence of heavy metals on some planets, an incorrect answer choice will talk about all planets.

✓ **Extreme words** (Always, Never, All, None, Only, Unique, Everyone, No one, Must, Impossible, The first, Each, Every, Totally). Unless given verbatim, these answers are almost always wrong. ✓ Answers that make an **unwarranted prediction**. Unless given verbatim, these answers are almost always wrong.

✓ **Very strong, emotional language** (dismiss, champion, radicalize, castigate, eulogize etc.). Unless given verbatim, these answers are almost always wrong.

✓ **Politically incorrect language** / something that can arouse a controversy (offensive to a group, region, religion, gender, race, nation etc.). Unless given verbatim, these answers are almost always wrong.

**A special case of AVOID**

o in RC **assumption** questions (this is applicable only in RC assumption questions, not CR assumption questions): whatever is mentioned in the passage must not be part of the answer choices.

o Imagine an argument that says: *Every male above 18 can vote. So, Jack can vote.*

In this argument, the first statement is the *Fact* and the second statement is the *Conclusion*. So, what is the assumption made in the argument above? The *assumption* made is: *Jack is a male above 18*.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

So, we have: **Fact**: Every male above 18 can vote. **Conclusion**: So, Jack can vote. **Assumption**: Jack is a male above 18.

If you notice carefully, each of the words – Jack, male, 18, and vote – is part of two of the three sentences above, not all three. This is very helpful in solving assumption questions in RC.

*Let’s now focus on the heart and soul of RC.* OCTAA**V**E – Verify **Verify** each word: (90% of RC is about just one word – Verify)

This is the **heart and soul of RC**. You must make sure that each word written in the choices is verifiable / justifiable from the passage.

Five most important words in RC

**Put your finger on it.**

It means ‘CAN YOU GO BACK AND VERIFY / JUSTIFY (as if ***putting your finger on it***) why the wrong answers are wrong?’

If not, the option choice must be wrong.

Remember, we have to verify / justify for the wrong answers, not the correct ones. And the last element in OCAATV**E** is **E**liminate.

**Eliminate**: Don’t be fixated on an answer choice if it seems attractive. Follow elimination of wrong ones rather than the selection of the “right” one.

The two most powerful tools in RC are **Verify** and **Eliminate**.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION ***Why is politically incorrect language considered wrong?***

**REASON:** The exam plays it safe. Correct answers are mostly mild (very difficult to prove false). It is too easy to find exceptions to extreme answer choices. For this reason, they are almost never correct. Remember, to the GMAC it doesn’t matter what the passages says. They don’t write the passages, but they do write the questions and the answers. They can choose to word correct or incorrect answers any way they like. They choose to do so in a way that won’t put them on the phone with dozens of experts in various fields who beg to differ with them.

**Can you spot why each of the choices given below will automatically be wrong, no matter what the content of the passage?**

1. Women should not work in the public sphere because they are not as rational as men. 2. Prove that scientists are more intelligent than mathematicians.

3. Milton was the first English author to focus on society as a whole as well as on individual characters. 4. The public is not interested in increasing its awareness of the advantages / disadvantages of nuclear fusion.

5. The public has been deliberately misinformed about the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power.

6. James, more than any other novelist, was aware of the difficulties of novelistic construction. 7. The author is primarily concerned with disputing evidence a scholar uses to substantiate a claim about a historical event

8. The emancipation of women would ultimately bring about the liberation of the entire Russian population from political oppression

9. The United States will import more oil in the next 10 years.

10.The author believes the purpose of children’s literature should be to expose children to the cruelties of life.

**Explanations**

1. Women should not work in the public sphere because they are not as rational as men. **Politically incorrect / sexist / can stir up a controversy**

2. Prove that scientists are more intelligent than mathematicians. **Politically incorrect / unprovable / can stir up a controversy**

3. Milton was the **first** English author to focus on society as a whole as well as on individual characters. **FIRST – unprovable / can stir up a controversy**

4. The public is not interested in increasing its awareness of the advantages / disadvantages of nuclear fusion. **Generalized for all / can stir up a controversy**

**5.** The public has been deliberately misinformed about the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power. **Politically incorrect / can stir up a controversy**

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION 6. James, more than any other novelist, was aware of the difficulties of novelistic construction. **Unprovable / can stir up a controversy**

7. The author is primarily concerned with **disputing evidence (means challenging a fact – not allowed in any question in all of RC and CR)** a scholar uses to substantiate a claim about a historical event.

8. The emancipation of women **would ultimately bring about (prediction – never choose prediction answers)** the liberation of the **entire (extreme)** Russian population from political oppression

9. The United States will import more oil in the next 10 years. **(Prediction – almost always wrong)** 10.The author believes the purpose of children’s literature should be to expose children to the cruelties of life. **Politically incorrect / can stir up a controversy**

**Can you spot why these tone answers are automatically wrong?**

*The author’s attitude towards a particular artist’s approach can best be described as:* 1. strong indignation

2. marked indifference

3. sharp derision

4. Overwhelming support

5. Unabashed admiration

6. Unqualified appreciation

7. Profound ambivalence

8. Deep-rooted hostility

9. Vehement condemnation

10.Unwavering denunciation

**Explanations**

1. strong indignation (extreme emotion)

2. marked indifference (the author can’t ever be indifferent about anything s/he writes) 3. sharp derision (extreme emotion)

4. Overwhelming support (extreme emotion)

5. Unabashed admiration (extreme emotion)

6. Unqualified appreciation (extreme emotion – “unqualified” means unlimited) 7. Profound ambivalence (extreme emotion plus the author is never ambivalent / uncertain / wavering) 8. Deep-rooted hostility (extreme emotion)

9. Vehement condemnation (extreme emotion)

10. Unwavering denunciation (extreme emotion)

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **CAUTION:**

OCTAVE has to be part of your subconscious. If you are forced to apply it consciously, the results will not be spectacular. Imagine how you learn to drive a car and how it is in the beginning. To this effect, you must solve at least 250 official GMAT passages strictly using OCTAAVE.

**SPECIAL SCENARIOS:**

**CR questions in RC**:

If any question in RC is about weaken, strengthen, assumption, evaluate, paradox etc. and involves “IF TRUE”, the rules of OCTAVE will not be applicable. “If true” means you can’t refer to the passage.

**Some people believe …**

**A special cue**: *Some people believe:* One of the most frequently used constructions is to raise a viewpoint and then **disagree** with it. This efficiently raises two opposing views in a passage. These constructs are recognizable because they often begin with the phrase, “Some people claim...” or one of the many variations on this theme, including but not limited to the following:

“Some people propose...” / “Many people believe...” / “Some people argue that...” / “Some critics claim...” / “Some critics maintain...” / “Some scientists believe... / “It is widely believed” / “Most people believe” / “It was / has been widely believed” / “It has been assumed / claimed”

All these imply that the author is likely to challenge whatever is said by others (not compulsory, though).

**Usually wrong answers / Red flags** (wrong 90% of the times) – explained in subsequent videos Resolve (rarely correct) / Reconcile (rarely correct) Resolve a debate (rarely correct) / Resolve a contradiction (rarely correct) / Resolve an inconsistency (rarely correct) / Resolve a paradox (rarely correct) / Reconcile opposing viewpoints (rarely correct) / Present evidence (rarely correct) / provide evidence (rarely correct) / Outline (rarely correct) / Chronology (rarely correct) / Bullet points (rarely correct) / Mathematical answers (rarely correct) / Define (rarely correct) / Explore (rarely correct)

**Criticism + Suggestion**

In all those passages that contain both criticism and suggestion, the suggestion must be captured in the primary purpose / main idea answer, even if the criticism isn’t captured.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Some more facts about RC:**

✓ **RC is the most crucial among all test areas:** You cannot cross the 705-mark if your RC is bad. My experience tells me that students really good at Quant, DI and CR, but average at RC tend to stop short of 705. We have seen countless 615-645 scorers, who, only for want of a superlative performance on RC, could just not breast the 705+ tape.

✓ RC under **normal concentration and relaxed pace** can be **very different** from RC under **trying exam conditions**: race against the clock, the mind refusing to understand any word at all, and the imperative to finish the test ensure that, more often than not, the biggest victim (and the biggest culprit) is RC.

✓ **When you don’t do well on an RC passage, you lose 3-4 questions in a row:** Consecutive errors are penalized so severely on the test that, at any given point on the test, 3-4 consecutive errors may bring your ‘current’ score by almost 60-80 points. Bad RC ensures that you have at least 3-4 such chunks of score-drops. OUCH!!

✓ **Normal pace:** Every conceivable resource possible on GMAT RC will ask you to speed-read, skip, skim, etc. Nothing could be gimmickier. Don’t speed-read GMAT RCs. It may be curtains! Your natural speed must improve after practicing 250-400 passages (minimum sweet number: 250 passages, strictly using OCTAAVE).

✓ **Read the full passage first:** Some books / test-prep companies ask you to read the questions first. Nothing could be a bigger disservice to yourself.

✓ **Don’t skip:** You can’t afford to skip information. Your understanding of the passage will be distorted otherwise.

✓ **Focus on understanding:** Every conceivable resource possible on GMAT RC will ask you to understand only the main idea and skip the details. I have even seen such advice: read only the first line of each para etc. BUT nothing like this works on the test day. There is no substitute for reasonable understanding. These resources / books / instructors / test-prep companies take only such passages that lend themselves to such gimmicks and show the application of the gimmicks that work on a ‘particular’ passage.

✓ **Don’t skim:** Skimming is a self-contradictory term. Without reading everything, how can one decide the grain from the chaff? Again, understand that there is no substitute for understanding. ✓ **Don’t reread:** Develop a habit of reading the passage only once and understanding it well. Most of us tend to reread at least the first few lines, if not the entire passage. The signal to our brain is: “let me not understand it fully. Anyway, I have to come back and reread.” It may be tough to get rid of this habit but this is extremely crucial to train your brain not to reread.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION ✓ **Don’t write anything at all:** The mother of all wrong pieces of advice on the GMAT is: write / make a skeletal / make a structure / annotate etc. UGH!! This is the WORST piece of advice one can give a student.

**Why should you not write?**

o You are going to be so pressed for time on the test day that you won’t be able to make any notes. Why learn and rely upon something that will not work on the test day?!

o Even if you make notes, invariably my experience says that students never use what they write. Why waste precious time?

o Once your brain gets a subconscious signal that you can write, your understanding vanishes; you are reduced to just taking notes passively. RC is about active thinking and application, not passive note-taking.

✓ **Must go back while solving the questions:** A lot of times, students rely upon their memory and miss out on the intentional distortion used so effectively by the test-makers (psychometricians). These people are masters of making the wrong answers that seem wayyyy more attractive than the right answers. The best way to avoid this is to go back to the passage to verify each word in the wrong answer choices. PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT!

✓ **Don’t do more general reading; solve more RC exercises:** The ubiquitous advice that people get when they do badly on RC is: READ, READ, and READ. **WRONG!** Solve more and more RC passages. **RIGHT!** You can use all of official GMAT / GRE / LSAT content for this.

✓ **Don’t bother about vocabulary:** A lot of people bother about understanding each word in the passage to an obsessional level. Indeed, a good vocabulary can help you, but there is no point in developing a superior vocabulary NOW. The efforts can be completely disproportionate compared to the returns. So, the best bet is to guess the meaning of a new word by its context.

✓ **Don’t solve anything else** except what has officially appeared on Standardized American Tests such as the GMAT, the GRE, or the LSAT. There are at least 700 genuine such passages available for you to practice with.

✓ Ideally for a passage with 3 questions, you must not take more than 5 minutes and for a passage with 4 questions, you must not take more than 6.5 minutes (including the reading of the passage and the solving of the questions).

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION ✓ **Avoid this blunder** (not taking care of the SPEED aspect from the word go): this happens a lot in RC and CR. I hear this grouse all the time: “in RC and CR, my accuracy is quite good if I don’t time myself. But if I time myself, the accuracy drops to less than 50%.” It is equivalent to a marathoner saying: “I can run 42 kilometers, but I need 4 days, not 4 hours.” Such people feel happy even if they manage to solve only one RC passage from the official guide in 27 minutes and get 5/7 correct. Remember: on the test day, you have less than 27 minutes to solve all the four RC passages. Invariably these students have 6-8 questions left in Quant and 8-10 questions left in Verbal to be done in the last 5-7 minutes (including the last RC passage, which, according to them, always happens to be the longest and the most difficult passage in the entire Verbal Section).

**The result:** their mind goes blank, refusing to understand anything, no matter how hard they try to focus. In addition, many students spend a disproportionately huge amount of time in the beginning, only to realize around Q. 10 that “this isn’t my day”.

**The solution:** always solve using a countdown timer, one that compulsorily stops at the end of minutes. Don’t use a simple clock; using the simple clock is disastrous because most students keep on solving questions even when the time is up. For example, suppose you take four RC passages and set aside 25 minutes. Invariably, you will NOT stop at the end of 25 questions. Later you will go something like this: “I took 41 minutes; so, I need to pace up.” This isn’t a strong message. The message is felt deeply and strongly when, while solving the third passage, the alarm goes off and you are forced to stop. Cultivate the habit of STOPPING when the alarm goes off; doing so may be very painful in the beginning, but is the only effective strategy (keeping the exam in mind).

✓ A common grouse of many students: “I can’t sit for 3 hours straight. I need a break every 15 min.” Moreover, they have all the distractions going on: WhatsApp messages, Instagram feeds, random calls—as if the world can’t continue to function for even 15 minutes without these people. Such students commit the cardinal GMAT sin: not building the most crucial aspect of the GMAT game: stamina and concentration.

✓ The most crucial: always practice on screen, **not on paper**. The biggest blunder people do while preparing for the GMAT is that they study on paper. ABSOLUTELY DISASTROUS for the GMAT! Make it a habit to never, ever study / practice anything on paper.

✓ Also, please don’t rely on take any shortcuts / gimmicks for RC. Solve at least 400 passages (absolute minimum 250) using OCTAAVE to feel absolutely confident about this section.

The following pages contain **68** real-GMAT Official passages. Each of these questions will be discussed in the classes (Live Online or Pre-recorded Videos) using OCTAAVE.

Session 1: 12 passages | Session 2: 20 passages | Session 3: 28 passages | Session 4: 8 passages

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**1. How can a passage have a neutral tone if there's an opinion by the author?**

The tone is positive only when the author praises someone or expresses optimism, and negative only when there’s a criticism/pessimism.

When there is no praise/criticism, the tone is neutral.

Here are some use cases to understand when the tone is neutral

1. Author is speculating about a cause of a certain phenomenon and the remaining passage is factual —> opinion is present, tone is neutral

2. Author is giving a suggestion to thoroughly analyse something and remaining passage is factual— > opinion is present (suggestion), tone is neutral (no criticism or praise).

Please note, on the GMAT, a suggestion does not imply a criticism automatically. **2. Why is "disputing evidence" wrong and considered as "challenging a fact"?**

Whenever you provide evidence for a claim or an opinion, that evidence is usually a fact and not an opinion itself. How do we back our claim? By some evidence and this evidence has to be factual in nature. Think of it as evidence in a criminal trial(say the murder weapon was found at the apartment of the accused). Now, the author can say maybe someone else put it there but he cannot dispute the evidence that it was found there. It has to be a fact. An author will not challenge a fact in any case. Therefore, disputing an evidence can never be the correct answer. The claim made by someone and the reasoning behind it can be challenged, but the evidence itslef cannot be challenged.

**3. How is conclusion identification in CR similar to opinion identification in RC?**

Basically any conclusion drawn or reached is an opinion. This may occur in various forms in a passage.

1. By taking sides —> agreement/support/praise

2. Presenting one’s own theory based on facts —> hypothesis

3. Presenting own beliefs/viewpoints, true only according to the author

4. Making suggestions

5. Predicting/speculating/guessing about a future occurrence

Etc.

These are considered opinions because they are in accordance with what the author thinks/believes/feels.

This makes such statements challengeable or debatable.

Since identifying the premise (fact) and the conclusion will be the most crucial step to solve CR questions, this slide will help as a test that you must apply to identify the same.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**OCTAAVE Illustration**

(Using 12 most important GMAT passages discussed with the help of a video – Video 1) **Passage 1**

It is a widespread belief in modern evolutionary biology that biological evolution has shaped not only the shapes of our bodies but also our “instinctive” behaviors that come to the fore when we experience different potentially constraining situations. The role of biological evolution in this process is not to dictate our behavior when we can think rationally, but rather to dictate our actions when we act under severe constraints and end up displaying these instinctive behaviors— ways of feeling, thinking, and acting that “come naturally” in archetypal situations in any culture. Our “frailties”—instincts such as rage, fear, greed, gluttony, joy, lust, and love—may be a very mixed assortment, but they share at least one immediate quality: we are, as is said, “in the grip” of them. And thus, they give us our sense of constraints.

One undeniable fact about these frailties is that some of these frailties are presently maladaptive. Ironically, one clear example of this maladaptiveness is our ever-increasing need for security. Yet beneath the overlay of cultural detail, even these maladaptive frailties, too, are said to be biological in direction, and are therefore as natural to us as are our appendixes. We would need to thoroughly comprehend the origin of these maladaptive frailties in order to understand how badly they guide us now. And we might then begin to resist the pressure of these maladaptive frailties in our distant future.

**1. While discussing maladaptive frailties, the author assumes which one of the following?**

I. Evolution does not favor the emergence of adaptive frailties over the emergence of maladaptive frailties

II. A few maladaptive frailties, once acquired, make the emergence of other maladaptive frailties more likely

III. Changes in the total human

environment can outpace evolutionary change

*Choose one answer from below:*

A. I only

B. II only

C. III only

D. I and II only

E. II and III only

**2. The author is primarily concerned with:**

A. presenting an overview of those human frailties that impose constraints on human behavior

B. describing a position on human frailties and presenting his own stance

C. outlining a new claim about foundations of human behavior with a special focus on maladaptive frailties and speculating on their origins

D. pointing out those human frailties that give us a sense of our constraints and presenting the outcome of such

constricting behaviors

E. suggesting ways to deal with a problem and predicting the eventual

consequences of not doing so

The complete discussion of this passage is done in **RC Awareness Video 2 – must watch** (1:41:18 onwards):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWuT9 flFnd8

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 2**

In 1965 a prestigious university in South Africa started the first-ever African women’s studies curriculum that was modeled exclusively after Western feminist values. The ensuing furore was anything but pleasant. There was widespread denunciation for what the program propagated. Various groups and organizations protested tooth and nail, condemning the program from start to finish. As expected, in all the broadcast debates, critics dismissed the curriculum as a betrayal of national identity, an imitation of Western ideas, and a distraction from the real task of national unification and economic development. Even supporters of the curriculum underestimated its potential; they thought it would be merely another of the many Western ideas that had already proved useful in African culture, akin to airlines, electricity, and the assembly line. Whatever the stance of the critics or of supporters may have been, one fact stands undeniable: few academic programs had ever received such public attention in all of Africa.

In their analysis the founders of the program found that, like the Western feminist critique of the Freudian model of the human psyche, the African critique finds Freudian theory culture

bound, but in ways different from those cited by Western theorists. The African theorists claim that Freudian theory assumes the universality of the Western nuclear, male-headed family and focuses on the personality formation of the individual, independent of society. Such a concept projects the competitive model of Western society onto human personalities; in the African concept of personality there is no ideal attached to individualism or to the independent self.

The Western model of personality development does not explain major characteristics of the African personality, which is social and group centered. The “self” is a social being defined by and acting in a group, and the well-being of both men and women is determined by the equilibrium of the group, not by individual self

assertion.

The founders also noted that, in such a context, what is recognized as “dependency” in Western psychiatric terms is not, in African terms, an admission of weakness or failure. In the kinship

based society of Africa, four generations may live in the same house; people can be sons and daughters all their lives, whereas in Western culture, the roles of husband and son, wife and daughter, are often incompatible.

**3. It can be inferred from the passage that the broadcast media in South Africa considered the start of the**

**women’s studies curriculum**

A. Praiseworthy

B. Insignificant

C. Newsworthy

D. Imitative

E. Incomprehensible

**4. Which of the following best**

**summarizes the content of the**

**passage?**

A. A critique of a particular women’s studies program

B. A report about a particular women’s studies program

C. An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a particular women’s studies program

D. An analysis of the philosophy underlying women’s studies programs

E. An abbreviated history of African studies programs

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 3**

***This passage was written in 2010:***

Rarely does a technology have such far reaching impact across the globe as has LCD technology in the past decade. In recent times, video display technologies have undergone a sea change in their precision. This has been aided by the rapid rise in the demand for High Definition (HD) pictures and videos. As a result, the active matrix liquid crystal diode (LCD) display is the dominant technology currently used in most consumer display products.

LCDs that are capable of producing color images, such as in televisions and computers, reproduce colors through a process of subtraction, blocking out particular color wavelengths from the spectrum of white light until only the desired color remains. It is the variation of the intensity of light permitted to pass through the matrix of liquid crystals that enables LCD displays to present images full of gradations of different colors.

The nature and functioning of LCD displays present many advantages relative to other display technologies. The amount of power required to untwist the crystals to display images, even dark ones, is much lower than that required for analogous processes using other technologies, such as plasma. The dense array of crystals displays images from computer or other video graphics sources extremely well, with full color detail, no flicker, and no screen burn-in. Moreover, the number of pixels per square inch on an LCD display is typically higher than that for other display technologies, so LCD monitors are particularly good at displaying large amounts of data with exceptional clarity and precision. As a result, LCD TVs are considered the best display platform for video games, high-definition television, movie special effects, and other graphics-intensive uses.

**5. The tone of the passage could best be described as**

A. disinterested explanation

B. supportive advocacy

C. cautious endorsement

D. intellectual exploration

E. qualified support

**6. According to the passage, which of the following may be considered advantages of LCD displays relative to other display technologies?**

I. they are able to display continuous video graphics images with no

interruption

II. they reflect a widely adopted standard III. they represent the latest, most advanced technology

*Choose one answer from below:*

A. I and III Only

B. II and III only

C. I and II only

D. I, II and III

E. III only

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 4**

Measuring more than five feet tall and ten feet long, the Javan rhinoceros is often called the rarest large mammal on earth. None exist in zoos. While the Javan rhino habitat once extended across southern Asia, now there are fewer than one hundred of the animals in Indonesia and under a dozen in Vietnam. Very little is known about Javan rhinos because they lead secretive and solitary lives in remote jungles. Till today, scientists debate whether females even have horns, and most scientific work has had to rely on DNA garnered from dung.

The near extinction of the Javan rhino is the direct result of human actions. For centuries, farmers, who favored the same habitat, viewed them as crop eating pests and shot them on sight. During the colonial period, hunters slaughtered them by thousands. Now, human efforts to save them may well prove futile. The rhinos are unprotected on the Ujung Kulon peninsula, which is unsettled by humans, and don’t have sufficient genetic diversity to have a chance at survival.

But what would happen if humans were to completely stop interfering in the Javan rhino habitats? Will there be a ray of hope for the survival of the Javan rhino species? The lack of human disturbance will allow mature forests to replace the shrubby vegetation the animals prefer. Thus, human benevolence (good actions on part of humans) may prove little better for these rhinos than past human maltreatment.

**7. Which of the following statements can be inferred from the passage?** I. In the last sentence of the passage, the author reiterates his pessimism about the survival of the Javan rhino species II. In the last sentence of the passage, the author expresses slight optimism about the fact that good actions on part of humans can probably increase the

chances of survival of the Javan rhino species

III. Genetic diversity is one of the most important factors for the survival of a species

*Choose one answer from below:*

A. I only

B. II and III only

C. II only

D. III only

E. I and III only

**8. Which of the following can be**

**inferred from the passage?**

I. More is known about the genetics of the Javan rhino than is known about its

mating patterns

II. Most animal extinctions are the result of human actions

III. Hunters killed more Javan rhinos in Vietnam than in Indonesia

*Choose one answer from below:*

A. I only

B. II and III only

C. III only

D. I, II, and III

E. II only

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 5**

The function of capital markets is to facilitate an exchange of funds among all participants, and yet in practice we find that certain participants are not on a par with others. Members of society have varying degrees of market strength in terms of information they bring to a transaction, as well as of purchasing power and creditworthiness, as defined by lenders.

For example, within minority communities, capital markets do not properly fulfill their functions; they do not provide access to the aggregate flow of funds in the United States. The financial system does not generate the credit or investment vehicles needed for underwriting economic development in minority areas. The problem underlying this dysfunction is found in a rationing mechanism affecting both the available alternatives for investment and the amount of financial resources. This creates a distributive mechanism penalizing members of minority groups because of their socioeconomic differences from others. The existing system expresses definite socially based investment preferences that result from the previous allocation of income and that influence the allocation of resources for the present and future. The system tends to increase the inequality of income distribution. And, in the United States economy, a greater inequality of income distribution leads to a greater concentration of capital in certain types of investment.

Most traditional financial-market analysis studies ignore financial markets’ deficiencies in allocation because of analysts’ inherent preferences for the simple model of perfect competition. Conventional financial analysis pays limited attention to issues of market structure and dynamics, relative costs of information, and problems of income distribution. Market participants are viewed as acting as entirely independent and homogeneous individuals with perfect foresight about capital-market behavior.

Also, it is assumed that each individual in the community at large has the same access to the market and the same opportunity to transact and to express the preference appropriate to his or her individual interest.

**9. The main point made by the passage is that**

A. financial markets provide for an optimum allocation of resources among all

competing participants by balancing

supply and demand

B. the allocation of financial resources takes place among separate individual

participants, all of whom have access to the market

C. the existence of certain factors adversely affecting members of minority groups shows that financial markets do not

function as conventional theory says they function

D. investments in minority communities can be made by the use of various alternative financial instruments, such as stocks and bonds

E. since transaction costs for stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments are not equally apportioned among all minority group members, the financial market is subject to criticism

**10.The author's main point is argued by** A. giving examples that support a

conventional generalization

B. showing that the view opposite to the author's is self-contradictory

C. criticizing the presuppositions of a proposed plan

D. showing that omissions in a theoretical description make it inapplicable in certain cases

E. demonstrating that an alternative

hypothesis more closely fits the data

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 6**

Woodrow Wilson was referring to the liberal idea of the economic market when he said that the free enterprise system is the most efficient economic system. Fascination with this ideal has made Americans defy the “Old World” categories of settled possessiveness versus unsettling deprivation, the cupidity of retention versus the cupidity of seizure, a “status quo” defended or attacked. The United States, it was believed, had no status quo ante. Our only “station” was the turning of a stationary wheel, spinning faster and faster. We did not base our system on property but opportunity—which meant we based it not on stability but on mobility. The more things changed, that is, the more rapidly the wheel turned, the steadier we would be. The conventional picture of class politics is composed of the Haves, who want a stability to keep what they have, and the Have Nots, who want a touch of instability and change in which to scramble for the things they have not. But Americans imagined a condition in which speculators, self-makers, runners are always using the new opportunities given by our land. These economic leaders (front runners) would thus be mainly agents of change. The nonstarters were considered the ones who wanted stability and a strong referee to give them some position in the race, a regulative hand to calm manic speculation; an authority that can call things to a halt, begin things again from compensatorily staggered “starting lines.”

**“Reform”** in America has been sterile because it can imagine no change except through the extension of this metaphor of a race, wider inclusion of competitors, **“a piece of the action,”** as it were, for the disenfranchised. There is no attempt to call off the race. Since our only stability is change, America seems not to honor the quiet work that achieves social interdependence and stability. The worst part is that, in our legends, there is no heroism of the office clerk or admiration for the stable industrial workforce of the people who actually make the system work.

There is no pride in being an employee (Wilson asked for a return to the time when everyone was an employer). There has been no boasting about our social workers—they are merely signs of the system’s failure, of opportunity denied or not taken, of things to be eliminated. We have no pride in our growing interdependence, in the fact that our system can serve others, that we are able to help those in need; empty boasts from the past make us ashamed of our present achievements, make us try to forget or deny them, move away from them. There is no honor but, in the Wonderland, race we are all expected to all run, all trying to win, none winning in the end (for there is no end).

**11.The primary purpose of the passage is to**

A. criticize the inflexibility of Americans’ strong belief in the idea of the free

enterprise economic system

B. praise “New World” economic ideologies C. admire the integrity of a political leader D. support those Americans whom the author deems to be neglected and

propose ways to improve their situation E. suggest a substitute for the traditional metaphor of a race

**12.Which of the following best expresses the author’s main point?**

A. Americans’ pride in their jobs continues to give them stamina today.

B. The absence of a status quo ante has undermined United States economic structure.

C. The free enterprise system has been a very popular system in the United

States.

D. The popular belief of Americans in the effectiveness of the free enterprise

system is flawed.

E. Fascination with the ideal of “openness” has made Americans sympathetic to the people who are not part of the economic race.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

Woodrow Wilson was referring to the liberal idea of the economic market when he said that the free enterprise system is the most efficient economic system. Fascination with this ideal has made Americans defy the “Old World” categories of settled possessiveness versus unsettling deprivation, the cupidity of retention versus the cupidity of seizure, a “status quo” defended or attacked. The United States, it was believed, had no status quo ante. Our only “station” was the turning of a stationary wheel, spinning faster and faster. We did not base our system on property but opportunity—which meant we based it not on stability but on mobility. The more things changed, that is, the more rapidly the wheel turned, the steadier we would be. The conventional picture of class politics is composed of the Haves, who want a stability to keep what they have, and the Have Nots, who want a touch of instability and change in which to scramble for the things they have not. But Americans imagined a condition in which speculators, self-makers, runners are always using the new opportunities given by our land. These economic leaders (front runners) would thus be mainly agents of change. The nonstarters were considered the ones who wanted stability and a strong referee to give them some position in the race, a regulative hand to calm manic speculation; an authority that can call things to a halt, begin things again from compensatorily staggered “starting lines.”

**“Reform”** in America has been sterile because it can imagine no change except through the extension of this metaphor of a race, wider inclusion of competitors, **“a piece of the action,”** as it were, for the disenfranchised. There is no attempt to call off the race. Since our only stability is change, America seems not to honor the quiet work that achieves social interdependence and stability. The worst part is that, in our legends, there is no heroism of the office clerk or admiration for the stable industrial workforce of the people who actually make the system work. There is no pride in being an employee (Wilson asked for a return to the time when everyone was an employer).

There has been no boasting about our social workers—they are merely signs of the system’s failure, of opportunity denied or not taken, of things to be eliminated. We have no pride in our growing interdependence, in the fact that our system can serve others, that we are able to help those in need; empty boasts from the past make us ashamed of our present achievements, make us try to forget or deny them, move away from them. There is no honor but, in the Wonderland, race we are all expected to all run, all trying to win, none winning in the end (for there is no end).

**13.It can be inferred from the passage that Woodrow Wilson’s ideas about the economic market**

A. encouraged those who, according to the author, make the system work

B. propagated and continued the traditional beliefs as to why Americans think they are so successful in the first place

C. revealed the prejudices of a society that values socialism over capitalism

D. foreshadowed the best possible economic system for America in times to come E. began a tradition of presidential

proclamations about the most effective economic system in America

**14.The author sets off the word “Reform” with quotation marks in order to**

A. emphasize its departure from the concept of settled possessiveness

B. show his support for a legislative program directed at massive changes in the

American society

C. highlight the flexibility and even

amorphousness of United States society D. indicate that the term was one of Wilson’s favorites

E. assert that reform in the United States has not helped those who haven’t been able to exploit the full benefits of the economic race

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

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**15.It can be inferred from the passage that the author most probably thinks that giving the disenfranchised “a piece of the action” is**

A. a compassionate legislative measure B. an example of Americans’ resistance to any major change

C. an innovative program for genuine social reform

D. a monument to the efforts of industrial reformers

E. a surprisingly “Old World” remedy for social ills

The complete discussion of this passage is done in **RC Awareness Video 1 – must watch** (00:32:10: onwards):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ep5iSrkXks s

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 7**

Seeking a competitive advantage, some professional service firms (for example, firms providing advertising, accounting, or health care services) have considered offering unconditional guarantees of satisfaction. Such guarantees specify what clients can expect and what the firm will do if it fails to fulfill these expectations. Particularly with first-time clients, an unconditional guarantee can be an effective marketing tool if the client is very cautious, the firm’s fees are high, the negative consequences of bad service are grave, or business is difficult to obtain through referrals and word-of-mouth.

However, an unconditional guarantee can sometimes hinder marketing efforts. With its implication that failure is possible, the guarantee may, paradoxically, cause clients to doubt the service firm’s ability to deliver the promised level of service. It may conflict with a firm’s desire to appear sophisticated, or may even suggest that a firm is begging for business. In legal and health care services, it may mislead clients by suggesting that lawsuits or medical procedures will have guaranteed outcomes. Indeed, professional service firms with outstanding reputations and performance to match have little to gain from offering unconditional guarantees. And any firm that implements an unconditional guarantee without undertaking a commensurate commitment to quality of service is merely employing a potentially costly marketing gimmick.

**16.The primary function of the passage as a whole is to**

A. account for the popularity of a practice B. evaluate the utility of a practice

C. demonstrate how to institute a practice D. denounce the utility of using a strategy E. explain the reasons for pursuing a strategy

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 8**

Planter-legislators of the post-Civil War southern United States enacted crop lien laws stipulating that those who advanced cash or supplies necessary to plant a crop would receive, as security, a claim, or lien, on the crop produced. In doing so, planters, most of whom were former slaveholders, sought access to credit from merchants and control over nominally free laborers—former slaves freed by the victory of the northern Union over the southern Confederacy in the United States Civil War. They hoped to reassure merchants that planters would produce crops and pay debts. Planters planned to use their supply credit to control their workers, former slaves who were without money to rent land or buy supplies. Planters imagined continuation of the pre-Civil War economic hierarchy: merchants supplying landlords, landlords supplying laborers, and laborers producing crops from which their scant wages and planters' profits would come, allowing planters to repay advances. Lien laws frequently had unintended consequences, however, thwarting the planter fantasy of mastery without slavery. The newly freed workers, seeking to become self-employed tenant farmers rather than wage laborers, made direct arrangements with merchants for supplies. Lien laws, the centerpiece of a system designed to create a dependent labor force, became the means for workers, with alternative means of supply advances, to escape that dependence.

**17.Which of the following best expresses the central idea of the passage?**

A. Planters in the post-Civil War southern United States sought to reinstate the institution of slavery.

B. Through their decisions regarding supply credit, merchants controlled post-Civil War agriculture.

C. Lien laws helped to defeat the purpose for which they were originally created.

D. Although slavery had ended, the economic hierarchy changed little in the post-Civil War southern United States.

E. Newly freed workers enacted lien laws to hasten the downfall of the plantation economy.

**18.The passage suggests which of the following about merchants in the post Civil War southern United States?**

A. They sought to preserve pre-Civil War social conditions.

B. Their numbers in the legislatures had been diminished.

C. Their businesses had suffered from a loss of collateral.

D. They were willing to make business arrangements with former slaves.

E. Their profits had declined because planters defaulted on debts for supply advances.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 9**

**19.The passage is primarily concerned with**

Historians have identified two dominant currents in the Russian women's movement of the late czarist period. "Bourgeois" feminism, so called by its more radical opponents, emphasized "individualist" feminist goals such as access to education, career opportunities, and legal reform. "Socialist" feminists, by contrast, emphasized class, rather than gender, as the principal source of women's inequality and oppression, and socialist revolution, not legal reform, as the only road to emancipation and equality.

However, despite antagonism between bourgeois feminists and socialist feminists, the two movements shared certain underlying beliefs. Both regarded paid labor as the principal means by which women might attain emancipation: participation in the workplace and economic self-sufficiency, they believed, would make women socially useful and therefore deserving of equality with men. Both groups also recognized the enormous difficulties women faced when they combined paid labor with motherhood. In fact, at the First All-Russian Women's Congress in 1908, most participants advocated maternity insurance and paid maternity leave, although the intense hostility between some socialists and bourgeois feminists at the Congress made it difficult for them to recognize these areas of agreement. Finally, socialist feminists and most bourgeois feminists agreed in not giving priority to women's emancipation, but rather to what they considered the more important goal of liberating the Russian population from political oppression and other political evils.

A. identifying points of agreement between two groups

B. advocating one approach to social reform over another

C. criticizing two approaches to solving a political problem

D. arguing that the views espoused by one political group were more radical than those espoused by another group

E. criticizing historians for overlooking similarities between the views espoused by two superficially dissimilar groups

**20.The passage suggests that socialists within the Russian women's movement and most bourgeois feminists believed that in Russia**

A. women would not achieve economic equality until they had political representation within the government

B. the achievement of larger political aims should take priority over the achievement of women's rights

C. the emancipation of women would ultimately bring about the liberation of the entire Russian population from political oppression

D. women's oppression was more rooted in economic inequality than was the case in other countries

E. the women's movement was more ideologically divided than were women's movements in other countries

**21.According to the passage, Russian socialists within the women's movement and most bourgeois feminists disagreed about which of the following?**

A. Whether legal reform was central to the achievement of feminist goals

B. Whether paid employment was important for the achievement of equality

C. Whether maternity insurance was desirable for working mothers

D. Whether working mothers faced obstacles E. Whether women's emancipation should be subordinated to the goal of liberating the Russian population

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 10**

Colonial historian David Allen's intensive study of five communities in seventeenth-century Massachusetts suggests that much more coherence and direct continuity existed between English and colonial agricultural practices and administrative organization than other historians have suggested. However, he overstates his case with the declaration that he has proved "the remarkable extent to which diversity in New England local institutions was directly imitative of regional differences in the mother country."

Such an assertion ignores critical differences between seventeenth-century England and New England. First, England was overcrowded and land-hungry; New England was sparsely populated and labor-hungry. Second, England suffered the normal European rate of mortality; New England, especially in the first generation of English colonists, was virtually free from infectious diseases. Third, England had an all embracing state church; in New England membership in a church was restricted to the elect. Fourth, a high proportion of English villagers lived under paternalistic resident squires; no such class existed in New England. By narrowing his focus to village institutions and ignoring these critical differences, which studies by Greven, Demos, and Lockridge have shown to be so important, Allen has created a somewhat distorted picture of reality.

Allen's work is a rather extreme example of the "country community" school of seventeenth century English history whose intemperate excesses in removing all national issues from the history of that period have been exposed by Professor Clive Holmes. What conclusion can be drawn, for example, from Allen's discovery that Puritan clergy who had come to the colonies from East Anglia were one-third to one-half as likely to return to England by 1660 as were Puritan ministers from western and northern England?

We are not told in what way, if at all, this **discovery** illuminates historical understanding. Studies of local history have enormously expanded our horizons, but it is a mistake for their authors to conclude that village institutions are all that mattered, simply because their functions are all that the records of village institutions reveal.

**22.The author of the passage is primarily concerned with**

A. substantiating a claim about a historical event B. reconciling two opposing ideas about a historical era

C. disputing evidence a scholar uses to substantiate a claim about a historical event D. analyzing two approaches to scholarly research and evaluating their methodologies E. criticizing a particular study and the approach to historical scholarship it represents

**23.It can be inferred from the passage that the author of the passage considers Allen's “discovery” to be**

A. already known to earlier historians B. exclusive to Allen

C. improbable but highly convincing

D. an unexplained, isolated fact

E. a new, insightful observation

**24.The passage suggests that Professor Clive Holmes would most likely agree with which of the following statements?**

A. It is important to understand broad national issues in order to understand seventeenth century English institutions thoroughly.

B. The "country community" school of seventeenth-century English history distorts historical evidence in order to establish continuity between old and new institutions.

C. Most historians distort reality by focusing on national concerns to the exclusion of local concerns.

D. National issues are best understood from the perspective of those at the local level.

E. Isolated local pieces of information about seventeenth-century English villages are the most crucial pieces of evidence to understand national life in that era.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 11**

For many years, **historians** thought that the development of capitalism had not faced serious challenges in the United States. Writing in the early twentieth century, progressive historians sympathized with the battles waged by farmers and small producers against large capitalists in the late nineteenth century, but they did not question the widespread acceptance of laissez-faire (unregulated) capitalism throughout American history. Similarly, Louis Hartz, who sometimes disagreed with the Progressives, argued that Americans accepted laissez-faire capitalism without challenge because they lacked a feudal, pre-capitalist past. Recently, however, some **scholars** have argued that even though laissez-faire became the prevailing ethos in nineteen-century America, it was not accepted without struggle. Laissez-faire capitalism, they suggest, clashed with existing religious and communitarian **norms** that imposed moral constraints on acquisitiveness to protect the weak from the predatory, the strong from corruption, and the entire culture from materialist excess. Buttressed by mercantilist notions that government should be both regulator and promoter of economic activity, these norms persisted long after the American Revolution helped unleash the economic forces that produced capitalism. These scholars argue that even in the late nineteenth century, with the government’s role in the economy considerably diminished, laissez faire had not triumphed completely. Hard times continued to revive popular demands for regulating business and softening the harsh edges of laissez-faire capitalism.

**25. The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. reveal the underlying similarities of certain arguments regarding the development of capitalism in the United States

B. synthesize two competing arguments regarding the development of capitalism in the United States

C. defend an established argument regarding the development of capitalism in the United States D. summarize a scholarly refutation of an argument regarding the development of capitalism in the United States

E. discuss a new methodology for the study of the development of capitalism in the United States

**26. According to the passage, the Progressive historians and the scholars mentioned in the highlighted texts disagree with regard to which of the following?**

A. Whether laissez-faire became the predominant ethos in the nineteenth-century United States B. Whether moral restraints on acquisitiveness

were necessary in the nineteenth century United States

C. The economic utility of mercantilist notions of government

D. The nature of the historical conditions necessary for the development of laissez-faire capitalism in the nineteen-century United States

E. The existence of significant opposition to the development of laissez-faire capitalism in the nineteen-century United States

**27. The passage suggests that the scholars mentioned in the highlighted text would agree with which of the following statements regarding the “norms” mentioned in the subsequent highlighted text?**

A. They provided a source of opposition to the development of laissez-faire capitalism in the United States in the nineteenth century.

B. Their appeal was undermined by difficult economic times in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century.

C. They disappeared in the United States in the late nineteenth century because of the triumph of laissez-faire capitalism.

D. They facilitated the successful implementation of mercantilist notions of government in the United States in the nineteenth-century.

E. They are now recognized by historians as having been an important part of the ideology of the American Revolution.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Passage 12**

According to a theory advanced by researcher Paul Martin, the wave of species extinctions that occurred in North America about 11,000 years ago, at the end of the Pleistocene era, can be directly attributed to the arrival of humans, i.e., the Paleoindians, who were ancestors of modern Native Americans. However, anthropologist Shepard Krech points out that large animal species vanished even in areas where there is no evidence to demonstrate that Paleoindians hunted them. Nor were extinctions confined to large animals: small animals, plants, and insects disappeared, presumably not all through human consumption. Krech also contradicts Martin’s exclusion of climatic change as an explanation by asserting that widespread climatic change did indeed occur at the end of the Pleistocene. Still, Krech attributes secondary if not primary responsibility for the extinctions to the Paleoindians, arguing that humans have produced local extinctions elsewhere. But, according to historian Richard White, even the attribution of secondary responsibility may not be supported by the evidence. White observes that Martin’s thesis depends on coinciding dates for the arrival of humans and the decline of large animal species, and Krech, though aware that the dates are controversial, does not challenge them; yet **recent archaeological discoveries** are providing evidence that the date of human arrival was much earlier than 11,000 years ago. Thus, White’s hypothesis stands vindicated.

**28.Which of the following is true about Martin’s theory, as that theory is described in the passage?**

A. It assumes that the Paleo-Indians were dependent only on hunting for survival. B. It denies that the Pleistocene species extinctions were caused by climate change. C. It uses as evidence the fact that humans have produced local extinctions in other situations.

D. It attempts to address the controversy over the date of human arrival in North America. E. It admits the possibility that factors other than the arrival of humans played a role in the Pleistocene extinctions.

**29.The author refers to “recent archaeological discoveries” most probably in order to**

A. refute White’s suggestion that neither Martin nor Krech adequately account for Paleoindians’ contributions to the Pleistocene extinctions

B. challenge on the possibility that a more definitive theory regarding the causes of the Pleistocene extinctions may be forthcoming

C. suggest that Martin’s, Krech’s, and White’s theories regarding the Pleistocene extinctions are all open to question

D. call attention to the most controversial aspect of all the current theories regarding the Pleistocene extinctions

E. provide support for White’s questioning of both Martin’s and Krech’s positions regarding the role of Paleoindians in the Pleistocene extinctions

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Answer Key – RC Session: 1 OCTAAVE Illustration** Detailed OCTAAVE based video solutions (to each of these passages) in RC Video 1, shared as part of Top-One-Percent GMAT courses (for registered courses only).

Passage 1

C B

Passage 2

C B

Passage 3

A C

Passage 4

A A

Passage 5

C D

Passage 6

A D B E B

Passage 7

B

Passage 8

C D

Passage 9

A B A

Passage 10

E D A

Passage 11

D E A

Passage 12

B E

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 THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Expert solutions to selected queries asked by students**

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 THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 1**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

In para 1, the author talks about the "widespread belief" - this is a general opinion - a general position. The author doesn't elaborate anything about this position - it is just presented so that the author can put forth his / her argument in light of this general position. **So, this is "summarizing a general position" - this part of the answer comes from para 1**

In the second para, the author presents his / her opinion in two parts: part 1: "we would need to thoroughly comprehend" ... this is a **suggestion** (that we don't know but would need to know - there is absolutely NO SPECULATION (means guesswork), so choice C is absolutely wrong) - definitely the author's own opinion.

Part 2: "We might then begin to ... " - this is a prediction by the author.

So, para 1 has no personal opinion of the author - the word 'summarize' is for para 1 Para 2 has author's opinion - so 'presenting his own stance'

Had the option been only "summarizing a general position", the answer would have been wrong, as the passage clearly has author's personal opinion.

\_\_\_

In short,

Please understand that there are two parts in choice B: summarize (para 1, no personal opinion of the author) and presenting his own stance (para 2)

The question stem "the author is primarily concerned with" asks of the author's opinion in this case. The author in the given passage has a personal opinion, and if you observe Option (B), it states - "summarizing a general position (para 1) on human frailties and presenting his own stance (para 2). "presenting his own stance" means s/he is stating his/her own personal view. So this answer choice captures the opinion. Please note that the tone of the passage and hence of the correct answer choice can be neutral even if the author has an opinion. Since this passage does not have any criticism/praise, its tone is neutral.

Note – 1. In the lines “Our “frailties”—instincts such as rage, fear, greed, gluttony, joy, lust, and love— may be a very mixed assortment”, “may be” is not opinion here. For example: He may be seemingly aggressive, but beneath his tough exterior, he is very sensitive.

There is no opinion here.

2. The author builds on the argument of the biologists in Para 2 without challenging the first Para at all. This is clear-cut support.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Q1.**

In order to find the assumption made by the author, identify the conclusion the author is making, and the premise used to arrive at that conclusion. And then apply the method. In this question, the premise comes from this line - “some of these frailties are presently maladaptive”. Conclusion derived by author from this is - “we might begin to resist the pressure of these maladaptive frailties in our distant future”. So, statements 1 and 2 are ruled out.

Further, if you negate Statement (I) and say nature does favour adaptive frailties over non-adaptive ones, the author can still say what he is saying - that our frailties are presently maladaptive (no implications for this). The author does not say anything about Statement (II) at all - nothing about some such maladaptive frailties leading to others. Then Statement (II) cannot be an assumption the author is making. Ten by default Statement (III) is our answer.

**Q2.**

**(A) –** This doesn't capture the author's opinion but only the first para.

**(B) –** In the first paragraph, the author is discussing the opinion of the biologists. In the second paragraph the author gives a personal opinion. The author is doing both: describing the opinion of the biologists and presenting his own stance. Hence, Option (B) correctly aligns with the tone and opinion of the passage.

Note – A passage with a suggestion / prediction can still be a neutral tone passage. For example: He should study more ... suggestion but neutral

He will pass the exam ... prediction but neutral

**Passage 3**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Additional context on the passage –** In the following lines from the passage,

“Rarely does a technology have such a far-reaching impact across the globe as has LCD technology in the past decade.”

“The nature and functioning of LCD displays present many advantages relative to other display technologies.”

You can apply the two tests to identify if any statement is a fact or author's personal opinion.

The above statements are not a praise/criticism/suggestion/prediction/belief of/by the author (test 1). Next, this cannot be challenged nor is it debatable (test 2). So, it's not a personal opinion. For example, if you say - "This course is considered the best" to your friend, you are obviously stating the public opinion of the course, correct? Same meaning here. It's a fact.

Say the author has written a sentence that says 'LCD is capable of processing coloured images'. This is completely verifiable. You can actually pull up data and verify this. So this is a fact. In the real world such a fact may be correct or incorrect, but on the GMAT, everything is fact-checked and you can take any fact to be completely correct. Now say the author said a sentence such as 'LCD is the best technology on earth'. Can you possibly verify this? Conversely, you can easily challenge this and say what?! No, I think XYZ technology is so much better than LCD is. These are opinions. Opinions cannot be right or wrong; they are just opinions and everybody is entitled to their own.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Q5.**

**(A) –** The term ‘Disinterested’ means scientific, objective, i.e., the author is explaining objectively. It implies not having any personal agenda / bias / preference.

**(B) –** In RC, some facts may arouse emotions (positive or negative), in this case may be a desire to own an LCD TV, however that has nothing to do with the passage or the author's intent. The author is not himself/herself making a case for it / recommending to buy. For an argument facts are required to make a point (Conclusion derived from facts), however in this passage the facts are merely stated. They are not utilized further to make a point / try to convince people to buy. The suggestion must be present as part of the author's personal opinion for "supportive advocacy" to be the right choice. Clearly not the case here. So, it can't ever be correct.

**Passage 4**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Additional context on the passage –** In the passage, the author expresses pessimism about the fate of the Javan rhinos but does not blame human beings for the situation. Hence, there is no criticism towards humans. There are two reasons for this:

• He states as a fact that human malevolence has directly caused a decline in population of the Javan rhino.

• Observe the last paragraph in its entirety. The author says that even if humans completely stop meddling in the affairs / habitats of the Javan rhino, i.e., if humans become neutral or benevolent, even then the rhino species has little chance of survival because of other reason (little chance of survival means very low / next to none chance of survival) – if humans stop interfering, the food that the rhinos prefer will vanish. So, if humans interfere, the rhinos die. If humans don’t interfere, the food of the rhinos disappears, and hence they die. This is a perfect irony.

**Q8.**

**Statement 1 –** If we know about the DNA, we have all genetic information (DNA contains all the genetic information needed) … “And most scientific work has had to rely on DNA garnered from dung.” If they (scientists) don't even surely know whether females have horns, they have certainly have not even seen a male and a female together. So, zero information about mating patterns. Therefore, this statement is 100 percent inferable.

**Statement III -** We cannot say with 100 percent certainty that hunters killed more. We cannot you assign values. We don’t know if there was one cause of death. Also, we cannot infer if the **hunters killed** more in Vietnam than in Indonesia. It’s possible that Vietnam had fewer rhinos than Indonesia in the first place, and even if hunters killed less in Vietnam, they are fewer in number **today comparatively.** So, without knowing the actual numbers then, we cannot infer this. Maybe initially there were only 100 Javan rhinos in Indonesia and 13 Javan rhinos in Vietnam. So if hunters killed 50 rhinos in Indonesia and 2 in Vietnam, there are less than 100 rhinos in Indonesia and under a dozen in Vietnam. But hunters killed more rhinos in Indonesia than in Vietnam

Moreover, there could have been other reasons for the population disparity.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 5**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Paragraph 1:** Author talks about Capital Markets’ function as (sort of) an ideal in theory but imperfect in practice.

**Paragraph 2:** Author continues his/her idea about the reason behind the shortcoming of function by giving an example. The example takes minority communities into consideration and enumerates what, how and why of the problem. He/she mentions that the financial system does not create enough ways so that investment can be generated and gives another reason behind that i.e., rationing system. Thus, the existing system which is flawed, is followed. This further increases the inequality gap, thus leading to non-uniform distribution of capital.

**Paragraph 3**: In this para, the author refers to analysis of markets. He/she mentions that studies in general **ignore (negative tone)** the shortcomings and **pay little attention (negative tone)** to actors actually affecting the capital market and makes the assumption **(the worst thing analysts can do – surely negative)** that every individual has perfect knowledge of the capital market and has the same access/opportunities. In making these assumptions, the conventional analysis ignores certain deficiencies in allocation. These deficiencies, as described in the second paragraph, are factors that adversely affect members of minority groups.

If the conventional analysis were accurate, the deficiencies described and the adverse effect on minority communities would not be present. However, the deficiencies DO exist, showing that financial markets do not function as conventional theory says they function, leading to non-uniformity in the market i.e., certain pockets are left out.

**Q9.**

**(A) –** Opposite of what author thinks. Financial markets are being criticized here for not treating the minorities fairly. Nowhere it is mentioned in the passage that allocation is optimum (means fair). Eliminate.

**(B) –** 180 degrees answer choice. Eliminate.

**(C) –** Conventional theory supports the perfect model where everyone has equal access. But in reality, the markets are not fair to the minorities, who do not have equal access. **Correct. (D) –** Not the central idea. Eliminate.

**(E) –** Not the central idea. Eliminate.

**Additional context on the passage -** The first line and the first contradiction word gives away the primary purpose and hence the tone of the passage. Further throughout the passage the author talks about shortcomings of the capital markets. The first line says that the financial markets theory says one thing and does something else entirely; this easily is criticizing. Even if you take all the information to be factual, there is no other option choice you can choose. Analysts' inherent preferences is the criticism (opinion). Last part is general public opinion, which is a fact for author.

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**Q10.**

**(A) –** Author is not supporting anything conventional – rather the author is criticizing the conventional model. Eliminate.

**(B) –** This is not a case of **self**-contradiction, which would require the opposition to contradict their own logic or their own statements. Eliminate.

**(C) –** Irrelevant. There's no evidence of a "proposed plan" in this passage. The author describes how traditional financial analysis ignores important issues and deficiencies. But traditional analysis and conventional wisdom are not the same as a "proposed plan."

**(D) –** The "theoretical description" is that capital markets facilitate an exchange of funds among all participants. This is a conventional view of market participation, and the author disagrees with this conventional view because it omits many cases (i.e., minority communities), in which capital markets fail to fulfill their functions. Thinking about this structurally, we see that in the first paragraph, the author declares that the conventional theory about capital markets is inaccurate. In the second paragraph, the author shows cases that are omitted by this conventional theory, and therefore can't be explained by that theory. In the third paragraph, the author explains the assumptions that lead to these cases being omitted during conventional analysis. This structure matches the language in Option (D). **(E) –** Alternative hypothesis is not mentioned anywhere in the passage. Eliminate.

**Passage 6**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Additional context on the passage –** (To understand the tone)

**“Reform”** in America has been **sterile…”** means completely ineffective. This is an extremely negative word.

“Because it can **imagine no change (criticism again)** except through the extension of this metaphor of a race, wider inclusion of competitors…”

**“a piece of the action (means some small steps taken to make the less privileged part of the mainstream but no genuine reform or social change criticism again),** as it were, for the disenfranchised.”

“Since our only stability is change, America **seems not to honor (criticism again)**

“There is, in our **legends…” (this means, traditionally America has praised super successful economic leaders only criticism again)**

This passage contains a very strong opinion (criticism of the free-market enterprise system). So the tone is extremely negative (critical) of the beliefs of most Americans and of Woodrow Wilson. This passage is pure criticism.

**Q13.**

What the initial lines (and then the rest of the passage) say(s) is that Woodrow Wilson propagated the liberal idea of the most economic system. It never says this was indeed true. On the contrary, it says quite the opposite - the passage goes to great lengths to describe how said 'most efficient' economic system is actually a perilous one which has moved the goalposts for a vast number of Americans on what 'success' etc. should look like in an economic system. Kind of what Fox News would have to say on

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the subject! So this definitely did *not* start a proclamation for the most efficient economic system in America. Also, what Option (E) means is that this started a tradition whereby people (presidents etc.) continued to proclaim that subsequently later on as well that the system was the most efficient - again something the passage doesn't say. It means whenever a new president came after Woodrow Wilson, every single one of them proclaimed which the most effective economic system was for America. We do not have information about all the future presidents of America and what they did.

**Q14.**

The "Reform" in America has been sterile..... - this means that there has been no reform; all that has happened in terms of change is that more people have gotten included in the proverbial race mentioned in the first paragraph. More people have joined the rat race does not mean that there has been a reform in the society. Option C says the author is saying that the american society is flexible and amorphous; This is totally opposite of what the author wants to convey by this statement.

Passage 7

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

Additional context on the passage – “And any firm that implements an unconditional guarantee without undertaking a commensurate commitment to quality of service is merely employing a potentially costly marketing gimmick.” constitutes an opinion.

Analogy: Anyone who takes photos and posts in social media while helping others is merely doing so for publicity (It involves my personal opinion). The same structure/intent is followed in the passage as well.

**Passage 8**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Summary of passage –** Planters (former slave owners) wanted to continue a form of slavery without mastery (as slavery had been abolished through the Civil War). They set up an arrangement where merchants would lend them (planters) money and other required things (in return get a lien on the crops grown) and the planters would take that money and get former slaves to grow crops. From the proceeds of the crops, the slave's salary and planter's profits would come. But this did not quite always work out this way - the former slaves bypassed the planters and went to merchants to set up a similar arrangement - the merchants would give these former slaves the money on credit and get a lien on the crops grown (essentially the planters / former slave-owners were being cut out of the value chain).

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**Passage 9**

**Q20.**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

In the lines from the passage: “Finally, socialist feminists and most bourgeois feminists agreed in not giving priority to women's emancipation, but rather to what they considered the more important goal of liberating the Russian population from political oppression and other political evils.” shows that both bourgeois feminists and socialist feminists believed in this, so this is the point of agreement between the two. Political representation is not what they wanted. Hence, (C) is incorrect and (B) is the correct answer choice.

The author does NOT say that the emancipation of women would LEAD TO the liberation of the entire Russian population from political oppression, so (C) should be eliminated.

This means that both groups agree that women's emancipation should be less important than liberating Russia from some big problems. So, The main goal should be liberating Russia, and indeed the efforts should be focussed on achieving this more important goal first. B is correct!

Answer choice C is incorrect because the passage never says that emancipation of women is a mean to achieve the big goal of Russia. So they believe liberating the entire Russian population is more important than women's emancipation, which is the opposite of what they believe.

**Passage 10**

**Q24.**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**(B) –** Option B is incorrect because it says "distorts historical evidence". Distorting historical evidence would mean that they somehow twisted the facts to fit into their narrative but actually what Clive Holmes says is that they straight up ignore/omitted any national concern whatsoever. That is why Option B is incorrect. It is in option choices with such subtle differences where Put You Finger On IT comes in handy.

**Passage 11**

**Additional context on the passage –** Think of the first part, where the author is introducing the premise that traditionally historians thought capitalism grew uncontested to be just that - a premise. The author is saying that to set up the second / main part of the passage - where they describe how this view has changed among scholars in recent times. Now scholars believe capitalism always had an underlying system of checks and balances to 'keep it in line' so to say. This second part is what the author is mainly trying to explain (the scholarly refutation of the traditional view of how capitalism grew). The first part (the explanation of the traditional view) is the 'springboard' to set the latter part up.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION **Q25.**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

We can reach the correct answer by POE using OCTAVE as follows:

(A) - "reveal the underlying similarities" - 180 degree answer choice. Yes, although they both agreed that capitalism was accepted in the United States, they disagreed on whether the acceptance came about with or without struggle. It can be clearly inferred from the lines "Recently, however, ...scholars have argued that even though laissez-faire capitalism became the prevalent ethos...**it was not accepted without struggle**". This highlights the disagreement between the historians and the scholars which forms the CRUX of the passage as it is a key contradiction location. Eliminate.

(B) - to "synthesize" means to make something by combining/merging two things. Here, the author is not offering a synthesis of the two stated arguments at all. Rather, the author only mentions the beliefs of historians and scholars. Eliminate.

(C) - If the author is "defending an argument", it would imply that the author has an opinion in the passage. However, we know that the passage has no opinion given by the author and its tone is neutral. Eliminate.

(E) - "discussing a new methodology" implies that the author is offering an alternative (not given in the passage) and implies an opinion. Moreover, "methodology" is a red flag". Eliminate.

So, Option (D) is the correct answer. Everything from 'Recently, however, some scholars have argued...' has been written to present an opposing scholarly view of how capitalism did not develop in America unopposed - how it clashed with existing checks and balances in place and it was never a triumphant, pure, unopposed win for laissez-faire capitalism in the US. This is the reason Option (D) is correct.

**Q27.**

Additional context on the question – Laissez-faire capitalism, contrary to popular belief, did *not* grow unchecked and unopposed in the US.

One of the things the author says to support this is that capitalism **was at odds with some existing norms**. These are some other characteristics about the norms we understand from the passage:

1) They were essentially a system of checks and balances against capitalism - these norms established a moral compass to prevent materialist excess (and also things like oppression of the weak by the strong etc.)

2) These norms were supported through notions that government should both be regulator and promoter of economic activity (not the other way round - the norms did not *give rise to* such notions) 3) These norms were in place long after the seeds of laissez-faire capitalism had germinated (i.e. long after the genesis of laissez-faire capitalism)

**Passage 12**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Q28.**

**(B) –** Exclusion of climate change means climate change was surely not the reason as per Martin. Correct.

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**48 Practice Passages – Primary Purpose** Explained in videos (Video 2: passage 1 to 20 | Video 3: passage 21 to 48)

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**Passage 1**

Roger Rosenblatt’s book *Black Fiction*, in attempting to apply literary rather than sociopolitical criteria to its subject, successfully alters the approach taken by most previous studies. As Rosenblatt notes, criticism of Black writing has often served as a pretext for expounding on Black history. Addison Gayle’s recent work, for example, judges the value of Black fiction by overtly political standards, rating each work according to the notions of Black identity which it propounds.

Fiction assuredly springs from political circumstances; its authors consequently react to those circumstances in ways other than ideological, and talking about novels and stories primarily as instruments of ideology circumvents much of the fictional enterprise. Rosenblatt’s literary analysis discloses affinities and connections among works of Black fiction which solely political studies have overlooked or ignored.

Writing acceptable criticism of Black fiction presupposes giving satisfactory answers to a number of questions. First of all, is there a sufficient reason, other than the racial identity of the authors, to group together works by Black authors? Second, how does Black fiction make itself distinct from other modern fiction with which it is largely contemporaneous? Rosenblatt shows that Black fiction constitutes a distinct body of writing that has an identifiable, coherent literary tradition. Looking at novels written by Blacks over the last eighty years, he discovers recurring concerns and designs independent of chronology. These structures are thematic, and they spring, not surprisingly, from the central fact that the Black characters in these novels exist in a predominantly White culture, whether they try to conform to that culture or rebel against it.

Black Fiction does leave some aesthetic questions open, however. Rosenblatt’s thematic analysis permits considerable objectivity; he even explicitly states that it is not his intention to judge the merit of the various works – yet his reluctance seems misplaced, especially since an attempt to appraise might have led to interesting results. For instance, some of the novels appear to be structurally diffuse. Is this a defect, or are the authors working out of, or trying to forge, a different kind of aesthetic?

In addition, the style of some Black novels, like Jean Toomer’s Cane, verges on expressionism or surrealism; does this technique provide a counterpoint to the prevalent theme that portrays the fate against which Black heroes are pitted, a theme usually conveyed by more naturalistic modes of expression?

In spite of such omissions, what Rosenblatt does include in his discussion makes for an astute and worthwhile study. *Black Fiction* surveys a wide variety of novels, bringing to our attention in the process some fascinating and little-known works like James Weldon Johnson’s *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. Its argument is tightly constructed, and its forthright, lucid style exemplifies levelheaded and penetrating criticism.

**The author of the passage is primarily concerned with**

A. evaluating the soundness of a work of criticism

B. comparing various critical approaches to work of criticism

C. discussing the limitations of a particular work of criticism

D. summarizing the major points made in a work of criticism

E. explaining the theoretical background of a certain work of criticism

**The author of the passage believes that *Black Fiction* would have been improved had Rosenblatt**

A. praised more carefully the ideological and historical aspects of Black fiction

B. attempted to be more objective in his approach to novels and stories by Black authors

C. explored in greater detail the recurrent thematic concerns of Black fiction throughout its history

D. established a basis for placing Black fiction within its own unique literary tradition E. assessed the relative literary merit of the novels he analyzes thematically

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**Passage 2**

*This passage was written in 1980*

Most economists in the United States seem captivated by the spell of the free market. Consequently, nothing seems good or normal that does not accord with the requirements of the free market. A price that is determined by the seller or, for that matter, established by anyone other than the aggregate of consumers seems pernicious. Accordingly, it requires a major act of will to think of price-fixing (the determination of prices by the seller) as both “normal” and having a valuable economic function. In fact, price-fixing is normal in all industrialized societies because the industrial system itself provides, as an effortless consequence of its own development, the price fixing that it requires. Modern industrial planning requires and rewards great size. Hence, a comparatively small number of large firms will be competing for the same group of consumers. That each large firm will act with consideration of its own needs and thus avoid selling its products for more than its competitors charge is commonly recognized by advocates of free-market economic theories. But each large firm will also act with full consideration of the needs that it has in common with the other large firms competing for the same customers. Each large firm will thus avoid significant price-cutting, because price-cutting would be prejudicial to the common interest in a stable demand for products. Most economists do not see price-fixing when it occurs because they expect it to be brought about by a number of explicit agreements among large firms; however, this is not true.

Moreover, those economists who argue that allowing the free market to operate without interference is the most efficient method of establishing prices have not considered the economies of non-socialist countries other than the United States. These economies employ intentional price-fixing, usually in an overt fashion. Formal price-fixing by cartel and informal price-fixing by agreements covering the members of an industry are commonplace. Were there something peculiarly efficient about the free market and inefficient about price-fixing, the countries that have avoided the first and used the second would have suffered drastically in their economic development. There is no indication that they have.

Socialist industry also works within a framework of controlled prices. In the early 1970’s, the Soviet Union began to give firms and industries some of the flexibility in adjusting prices that a more informal evolution has accorded the capitalist system. Economists in the United States have hailed the change as a return to the free market. But Soviet firms are no more subject to prices established by a free market over which they exercise little influence than are capitalist firms; rather, Soviet firms have been given the power to fix prices.

**In the passage, the author is primarily concerned with**

A. predicting the consequences of a practice B. criticizing a point of view

C. calling attention to recent discoveries D. proposing a topic for research

E. summarizing conflicting opinions

**The author’s attitude toward “Most economists in the United States” in the first statement of the passage can best be described as**

A. neutral

B. adulatory

C. critical

D. ambivalent

E. deferential

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**Passage 3**

In the two decades between 1910 and 1930, over ten percent of the Black population of the United States left the South, where the preponderance of the Black population had been located, and migrated to northern states, with the largest number moving, it is claimed, between 1916 and 1918. It has been frequently assumed, but not proved, that the majority of the migrants in what has come to be called the Great Migration came from rural areas and were motivated by two concurrent factors: the collapse of the cotton industry following the boll weevil infestation, which began in 1898, and increased demand in the North for labor following the cessation of European immigration caused by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This assumption has led to the conclusion that the migrants’ subsequent lack of economic mobility in the North is tied to rural background, a background that implies unfamiliarity with urban living and a lack of industrial skills.

But the question of who actually left the South has never been rigorously investigated. Although numerous investigations document an exodus from rural southern areas to southern cities prior to the Great Migration, no one has considered whether the same migrants then moved on to northern cities. In 1910 over 600,000 Black workers, or ten percent of the Black work force, reported themselves to be engaged in “manufacturing and mechanical pursuits,” the federal census category roughly encompassing the entire industrial sector. The Great Migration could easily have been made up entirely of this group and their families. It is perhaps surprising to argue that an employed population could be enticed to move, but an explanation lies in the labor conditions then prevalent in the South.

About thirty-five percent of the urban Black population in the South was engaged in skilled trades. Some were from the old artisan class of slavery—blacksmiths, masons, carpenters— which had had a monopoly of certain trades, but they were gradually being pushed out by competition, mechanization, and obsolescence. The remaining sixty-five percent, more recently urbanized, worked in newly developed industries—tobacco, lumber, coal and iron manufacture, and railroads. Wages in the South, however, were low, and Black workers were aware, through labor recruiters and the Black press, that they could earn more even as unskilled workers in the North than they could as artisans in the South.

After the boll weevil infestation, urban Black workers faced competition from the continuing influx of both Black and White rural workers, who were driven to undercut the wages formerly paid for industrial jobs. Thus, a move north would be seen as advantageous to a group that was already urbanized and steadily employed, and the easy conclusion tying their subsequent economic problems in the North to their rural background comes into question.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. support an alternative to an accepted methodology

B. present evidence that resolves a contradiction C. introduce a recently discovered source of information

D. challenge a widely accepted explanation E. argue that a discarded theory deserves new attention

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**Passage 4**

At the end of the nineteenth century, a rising interest in Native American customs and an increasing desire to understand Native American culture prompted ethnologists to begin recording the life stories of Native American. Ethnologists had a distinct reason for wanting to hear the stories: they were after linguistic or anthropological data that would supplement their own field observations, and they believed that the personal stories, even of a single individual, could increase their understanding of the cultures that they had been observing from without. In addition, many ethnologists at the turn of the century believed that Native American manners and customs were rapidly disappearing, and that it was important to preserve for posterity as much information as could be adequately recorded before the cultures disappeared forever.

There were, however, arguments against this method as a way of acquiring accurate and complete information. Franz Boas, for example, described autobiographies as being “of limited value, and useful chiefly for the study of the perversion of truth by memory,” while Paul Radin contended that investigators rarely spent enough time with the tribes they were observing, and inevitably derived results too tinged by the investigator’s own emotional tone to be reliable.

Even more importantly, as these life stories moved from the traditional oral mode to recorded written form, much was inevitably lost. Editors often decided what elements were significant to the field research on a given tribe. Native Americans recognized that the essence of their lives could not be communicated in English and that events that they thought significant were often deemed unimportant by their interviewers. Indeed, the very act of telling their stories could force Native American narrators to distort their cultures, as taboos had to be broken to speak the names of dead relatives crucial to their family stories.

Despite all of this, autobiography remains a useful tool for ethnological research: such personal reminiscences and impressions, incomplete as they may be, are likely to throw more light on the working of the mind and emotions than any amount of speculation from an ethnologist or ethnological theorist from another culture.

**The primary purpose of the passage as a whole is to**

A. question an explanation

B. correct a misconception

C. critique an approach

D. discredit an idea

E. clarify an ambiguity

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 5**

*This passage was written in 1988.*

Since the late 1970’s, in the face of a severe loss of market share in dozens of industries, manufacturers in the United States have been trying to improve productivity—and therefore enhance their international competitiveness—through cost

cutting programs. (Cost-cutting here is defined as raising labor output while holding the amount of labor constant.). From 1978 through 1982, productivity—the value of goods manufactured divided by the amount of labor input—did not improve; the results were better in the business upturn of the three years following, they ran 25 percent lower than productivity improvements during earlier, post-1945 upturns. At the same time, it became clear that the harder manufactures worked to implement cost-cutting, the more they lost their competitive edge.

With this paradox in mind, I recently visited 25 companies; it became clear to me that the cost cutting approach to increasing productivity is fundamentally flawed. Manufacturing regularly observes a “40, 40, 20” rule. Roughly 40 percent of any manufacturing-based competitive advantage derives from long-term changes in manufacturing structure (decisions about the number, size, location, and capacity of facilities) and in approaches to materials. Another 40 percent comes from major changes in equipment and process technology. The final 20 percent rests on implementing conventional cost-cutting.

Another problem is that the cost-cutting approach hinders innovation and discourages creative people. As Abernathy’s study of automobile manufacturers has shown, an industry can easily become prisoner of its own investments in cost

cutting techniques, reducing its ability to develop new products. And managers under pressure to maximize cost-cutting will resist innovation because they know that more fundamental changes in processes or systems will wreak havoc with the results on which they are measured. Production managers have always seen their job as one of minimizing costs and maximizing output.

Every company I know that has freed itself from the paradox has done so, in part, by developing and implementing a manufacturing strategy. Such a strategy focuses on the manufacturing structure and on equipment and process technology and must be implemented by all those companies that want to improve long-term productivity. In one company a manufacturing strategy that allowed different areas of the factory to specialize in different markets replaced the conventional cost-cutting approach; within three years the company regained its competitive advantage. Together with such strategies, successful companies are also encouraging managers to focus on a wider set of objectives besides cutting costs. This is an example worth emulating. If we are to have a hope for manufacturing, the companies must change to a different way of managing.

**The author of the passage is primarily concerned with**

A. summarizing a thesis

B. recommending a different approach C. comparing points of view

D. making a series of predictions

E. describing a number of paradoxes

**The author’s attitude toward the culture in most factories is best described as**

A. cautious

B. critical

C. disinterested

D. respectful

E. adulatory

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 6**

*This passage was written in 1980.*

Since the early 1970’s, historians have begun to devote serious attention to the working class in the United States. Yet while we now have studies of working-class communities and culture, we know remarkably little of worklessness. When historians have paid any attention at all to unemployment, they have focused on the Great Depression of the 1930’s. By examining the period between 1870 1920, Alexander Keyssar, in his recent book, takes a different approach. Keyssar concentrates on Massachusetts, where the historical materials are particularly rich, and the findings applicable to other industrial areas.

The unemployment rates that Keyssar calculates appear to be relatively modest, at least by Great Depression standards: during the worst years, in the 1870’s and 1890’s, unemployment was around 15 percent. Yet Keyssar rightly understands that a better way to measure the impact of unemployment is to calculate unemployment frequencies—measuring the percentage of workers who experience any unemployment in the course of a year. Given this perspective, joblessness looms much larger.

Keyssar also scrutinizes unemployment patterns according to skill level, ethnicity, race, age, class, and gender. He finds that rates of joblessness differed primarily according to class: those in middle-class and white-collar occupations were far less likely to be unemployed. Yet the impact of unemployment on a specific class was not always the same. Even when dependent on the same trade, adjoining communities and places could have dramatically different unemployment rates. Keyssar uses these differential rates to help explain a phenomenon that has puzzled historians— the startlingly high rate of geographical mobility in the nineteenth-century United States. But mobility was not the dominant working-class strategy for coping with unemployment, nor was assistance from private charities or state agencies. Self-help and the help of kin got most workers through jobless spells.

While Keyssar should have spent more time developing the implications of his findings on joblessness for contemporary public policy, his study, in its thorough research and creative use of quantitative and qualitative evidence, is a model of historical analysis.

**The passage is primarily concerned with** A. recommending a new course of

investigation

B. assessing a study

C. making distinctions among categories D. praising the current state of a field E. comparing and contrasting two methods for calculating data

**The author views Keyssar’s study with** A. impatient disapproval

B. wary concern

C. polite skepticism

D. scrupulous neutrality

E. qualified admiration

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**Passage 7**

Increasingly, historians are blaming diseases imported from the Old World for the staggering disparity between the indigenous population of America in 1492—new estimates of which soar as high as 100 million, or approximately one-sixth of the human race at that time—and the few million full-blooded Native Americans alive at the end of the nineteenth century. There is no doubt that chronic disease was an important factor in the precipitous decline, and it is highly probable that the greatest killer was epidemic disease, especially as manifested in virgin-soil epidemics.

Virgin-soil epidemics are those in which the populations at risk have had no previous contact with the diseases that strike them and are therefore immunologically almost defenseless. That virgin-soil epidemics were important in American history is strongly indicated by evidence that a number of dangerous maladies— smallpox, measles, malaria, yellow fever, and undoubtedly several more—were unknown in the pre-Columbian New World. The effects of their sudden introduction are demonstrated in the early chronicles of America, which contain reports of horrendous epidemics and steep population declines, confirmed in many cases by recent quantitative analyses of Spanish tribute records and other sources. The British tended to drive the native populations away, rather than enslaving them as the Spaniards did, so that the epidemics of British America occurred beyond the range of colonists’ direct observation.

Surviving records of North America do contain references to deadly epidemics among the indigenous population. In 1616-1619 an epidemic, possibly of bubonic or pneumonic plague, swept coastal New England, killing as many as nine out of ten. During the 1630’s smallpox, the disease most fatal to the Native American people, eliminated half the population of the Huron and Iroquois confederations. In the 1820’s fever devastated the people of the Columbia River area, killing eight out of ten of them.

In 1952 an outbreak of measles among the Native American inhabitants of Ungava Bay, Quebec, affected 99 percent of the population and killed 7 percent, even though some had the benefit of modern medicine. Cases such as this demonstrate that even diseases that are not normally fatal can have devastating consequences when they strike an immunologically defenseless community.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. refute a common misconception

B. provide support for a hypothesis

C. analyze an argument

D. suggest a solution to a dilemma

E. reconcile opposing viewpoints

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**Passage 8**

*This passage was written in 1988.*

Until recently most astronomers believed that the space between the galaxies in our universe was a near-perfect vacuum. This orthodox view of the universe is now being challenged by astronomers who believe that a heavy “rain” of gas is falling into many galaxies from the supposedly empty space around them. The gas apparently condenses into a collection of small stars, each a little larger than the planet Jupiter. These stars vastly outnumber the other stars in a given galaxy. The amount of “intergalactic rainfall” into some of these galaxies has been enough to double their mass in the time since they formed. Scientists have begun to suspect that this intergalactic gas is probably a mixture of gases left over from the “big bang” when the galaxies were formed and gas was forced out of galaxies by supernova explosions.

It is well known that when gas is cooled at a constant pressure its volume decreases. Thus, the physicist Fabian correctly reasoned that as intergalactic gas cools, the cooler gas shrinks inward toward the center of the galaxy. Meanwhile its place is taken by hotter intergalactic gas from farther out on the edge of the galaxy, which cools as it is compressed and flows into the galaxy. The net result is a continuous flow of gas, starting as hot gases in intergalactic space and ending as a drizzle of cool gas called a “cooling flow,” falling into the central galaxy.

A fairly heretical idea in the 1970’s, the cooling flow theory rightly gained support when Fabian observed a cluster of galaxies in the constellation Perseus and found the central galaxy, NGC 1275, to be a strange-looking object with irregular, thin strands of gas radiating from it. According to previous speculation, these strands were gases that had been blown out by an explosion in the galaxy. Fabian, however, disagreed, and rightly so. Because the strands of gas radiating from NGC 1275 are visible in optical photographs, Fabian suggested that such strands consisted not of gas blown out of the galaxy but of cooling flows of gas streaming inward. He noted that the wavelengths of the radiation emitted by a gas would changes as the gas cooled, so that as the gas flowed into the galaxy and became cooler, it would emit not x rays, but visible light, like that which was captured in the photographs.

Fabian’s convincing hypothesis was also supported by Canizares’ determination in 1982 that most of the gas in the Perseus cluster was at a temperature of 80 million degrees Kelvin, whereas the gas immediately surrounding NGC 1275 (the subject of the photographs) was at one-tenth this temperature.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. illustrate a hypothesis

B. introduce a hypothesis that challenges an accepted theory and present some evidence to support that hypothesis

C. summarize the state of and prospects for research in intergalactic astronomy

D. report new data on the origins of intergalactic gas

E. reconcile opposing views on the formation of intergalactic gas

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**Passage 9**

*This passage was written in 1982.*

Japanese firms have achieved the highest levels of manufacturing efficiency in the world automobile industry. Some observers of Japan have assumed that Japanese firms use the same manufacturing equipment and techniques as United States firms but have benefited from the unique characteristics of Japanese employees and the Japanese culture. However, if this were true, then one would expect Japanese auto plants in the United States to perform no better than factories run by United States companies. This is not the case; Japanese-run automobile plants located in the United States and staffed by local workers have demonstrated higher levels of productivity when compared with factories owned by United States companies.

Other observers link high Japanese productivity to higher levels of capital investment per worker. But a historical perspective leads to a different conclusion. When the two top Japanese automobile makers matched and then doubled United States productivity levels in the mid sixties, capital investment per employee was comparable to that of United States firms. Furthermore, by the late seventies, the amount of fixed assets required to produce one vehicle was roughly equivalent in Japan and in the United States.

Since capital investment was not higher in Japan, it had to be other factors that led to higher productivity. A more fruitful explanation may lie with Japanese production techniques. Japanese automobile producers did not simply implement conventional processes more effectively: they made critical changes in United States procedures. For instance, the mass-production philosophy of United States automakers encouraged the production of huge lots of cars in order to utilize fully expensive, component specific equipment and to occupy fully workers who have been trained to execute one operation efficiently. Japanese automakers chose to make small-lot production feasible by introducing several departures from United States practices, including the use of flexible equipment that could be altered easily to do several different production tasks and the training of workers in multiple jobs. Automakers could schedule the production of different components or models on single machines, thereby eliminating the need to store the buffer stocks of extra components that result when specialized equipment and workers are kept constantly active.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. present the major steps of a process B. clarify an ambiguity

C. chronicle a dispute

D. correct misconceptions

E. defend an accepted approach

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 10**

Historians sometimes forget that history is continually being made and experienced before it is studied, interpreted, and read. These latter activities have their own history, of course, which may impinge in unexpected ways on public events. It is difficult to predict when “new pasts” will overturn established historical interpretations and change the course of history.

In the fall of 1954, for example, C. Vann Woodward delivered a lecture series at the University of Virginia which challenged the prevailing dogma concerning the history, continuity, and uniformity of racial segregation in the South. He argued that the Jim Crow laws of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not only codified traditional practice but also were a determined effort to erase the considerable progress made by Black people during and after Reconstruction in the 1870’s. This revisionist view of Jim Crow legislation grew in part from the research that Woodward had done for the NAACP legal campaign during its preparation for *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Supreme Court had issued its ruling in this epochal desegregation case a few months before Woodward’s lectures.

The lectures were soon published as a book, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. Ten years later, in a preface to the second revised edition, Woodward confessed with ironic modesty that the first edition “had begun to suffer under some of the handicaps that might be expected in a history of the American Revolution published in 1776.” That was a bit like hearing Thomas Paine apologize for the timing of his pamphlet *Common Sense*, which had a comparable impact. Although *Common Sense* also had a mass readership, Paine had intended to reach and inspire: he was not a historian, and thus not concerned with accuracy or the dangers of historical anachronism. Yet, like Paine, Woodward had an unerring sense of the revolutionary moment, and of how historical evidence could undermine the mythological tradition that was crushing the dreams of new social possibilities. Martin Luther King, Jr., testified to the profound effect of *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* on the civil rights movement by praising the book and quoting it frequently.

**The attitude of the author of the passage toward the work of C. Vann Woodward is best described as one of**

A. respectful regard

B. qualified approbation

C. implied skepticism

D. pointed criticism

E. fervent advocacy

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 11**

Joseph Glatthaar’s *Forged in Battle* is not the first excellent study of Black soldiers and their White officers in the Civil War, but it uses more soldiers’ letters and diaries—including rare material from Black soldiers—and concentrates more intensely on Black-White relations in Black regiments than do any of its predecessors. Glatthaar’s title expresses his thesis: loyalty, friendship, and respect among White officers and Black soldiers were fostered by the mutual dangers they faced in combat.

Glatthaar accurately describes the government’s discriminatory treatment of Black soldiers in pay, promotion, medical care, and job assignments, appropriately emphasizing the campaign by Black soldiers and their officers to get the opportunity to fight. That chance remained limited throughout the war by army policies that kept most Black units serving in rear-echelon assignments and working in labor battalions. Thus, while their combat death rate was only one-third that of White units, their mortality rate from disease, a major killer in his war, was twice as great. Despite these obstacles, the courage and effectiveness of several Black units in combat won increasing respect from initially skeptical or hostile White soldiers. As one White officer put it, “they have fought their way into the respect of all the army.”

In trying to demonstrate the magnitude of this attitudinal change, however, Glatthaar seems to exaggerate the prewar racism of the White men who became officers in Black regiments. “Prior to the war,” he writes of these men, “virtually all of them held powerful racial prejudices.” While perhaps true of those officers who joined Black units for promotion or other self-serving motives, this statement misrepresents the attitudes of the many abolitionists who became officers in Black regiments. Having spent years fighting against the race prejudice endemic in American society, they participated eagerly in this military experiment, which they hoped would help African Americans achieve freedom and postwar civil equality. By current standards of racial egalitarianism, these men’s paternalism toward African Americans was racist. But to call their feelings “powerful racial prejudices” is to indulge in generational chauvinism—to judge past eras by present standards.

**The passage as a whole can best be characterized as which of the following?** A. An evaluation of a scholarly study

B. A description of an attitudinal change C. A discussion of an analytical defect D. An analysis of the causes of a phenomenon E. An argument in favor of revising a view

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 12**

In most earthquakes the Earth’s crust cracks like porcelain. Stress builds up until a fracture forms at a depth of a few kilometers and the crust slips to relieve the stress. Some earthquakes, however, take place hundreds of kilometers down in the Earth’s mantle, where high pressure makes rock so ductile that it flows instead of cracking, even under stress severe enough to deform it like putty. How can there be earthquakes at such depths?

That such deep earthquakes do occur has been accepted only since 1927, when the seismologist Kiyoo Wadati convincingly demonstrated their existence. Instead of comparing the arrival times of seismic waves at different locations, as earlier researchers had done. Wadati relied on a time difference between the arrival of primary (P) waves and the slower secondary (S) waves. Because P and S waves travel at different but fairly constant speeds, the interval between their arrivals increases in proportion to the distance from the earthquake focus, or rupture point.

For most earthquakes, Wadati discovered, the interval was quite short near the epicenter, the point on the surface where shaking is strongest. For a few earthquakes, however, the delay was long even at the epicenter. Wadati saw a similar pattern when he analyzed data on the intensity of shaking. Most earthquakes had a small area of intense shaking, which weakened rapidly with increasing distance from the epicenter, but others were characterized by a lower peak intensity, felt over a broader area. Both the P-S intervals and the intensity patterns suggested two kinds of earthquakes: the more common shallow earthquakes, in which the focus lay just under the epicenter, and deep earthquakes, with a focus several hundred kilometers down.

The question remained: how can such quakes occur, given that mantle rock at a depth of more than 50 kilometers is too ductile to store enough stress to fracture? Wadati’s work suggested that deep earthquakes occur in areas (now called Wadati-Benioff zones) where one crustal plate is forced under another and descends into the mantle. The descending rock is substantially cooler than the surrounding mantle and hence is less ductile and much more liable to fracture.

**The passage is primarily concerned with** A. demonstrating why the methods of early seismologists were flawed

B. arguing that deep events are poorly understood and deserve further study C. defending a revolutionary theory about the causes of earthquakes and methods of predicting them

D. discussing evidence for the existence of deep earthquakes and the conditions that allow them to occur

E. comparing the effects of shallow events with those of deep events

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 13**

Most large corporations in the United States were once run by individual capitalists who owned enough stock to dominate the board of directors and dictate company policy. Because putting such large amounts of stock on the market would only depress its value, they could not sell out for a quick profit and instead had to concentrate on improving the long-term productivity of their companies. Today, with few exceptions, the stock of large United States corporations is held by large institutions—pension funds, for example— and because these institutions are prohibited by antitrust laws from owning a majority of a company’s stock and from actively influencing a company’s decision-making, they can enhance their wealth only by buying and selling stock in anticipation of fluctuations in its value. A minority shareholder is necessarily a short-term trader. As a result, United States productivity is unlikely to improve unless shareholders and the managers of the companies in which they invest are encouraged to enhance long-term productivity (and hence long-term profitability), rather than simply to maximize short-term profits.

Since the return of the old-style capitalist is unlikely, today’s short-term traders must be remade into tomorrow’s long-term capitalistic investors. The legal limits that now prevent financial institutions from acquiring a dominant shareholding position in a corporation should be removed, and such institutions should be encouraged to take a more active role in the operations of the companies in which they invest. In addition, any institution that holds twenty percent or more of a company’s stock should be forced to give the public one day’s notice of the intent to sell those shares. Unless the announced sale could be explained to the public on grounds other than anticipated future losses, the value of the stock would plummet and, like the old-time capitalists, major investors could cut their losses only by helping to restore their companies’ productivity. Such measures would force financial institutions to become capitalists whose success depends not on trading shares at the propitious moment, but on increasing the productivity of the companies in which they invest.

**In the passage, the author is primarily concerned with doing which of the following?** A. Comparing two different approaches to a problem

B. Describing a problem and proposing a solution

C. Defending an established method

D. Presenting data and drawing conclusions from the data

E. Comparing two different analyses of a current situation

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 14**

For over 300 years, one of the most enduring beliefs among historians of England has been that the character of English society has been shaped by the unique openness of its ruling elite to entry by self

made entrepreneurs (especially newly wealthy merchants) able to buy their way into the ranks of elite society. This upward mobility, historians have argued, allowed England to escape the clash between those with social / political power and those with economic power, a conflict that beset the rest of Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Upward mobility was also used to explain England’s exceptional stability since the late seventeenth century (no revolutions, for example), as well as such major events as the development of the most efficient agricultural system in Europe and the making of the first industrial revolution.

But is the thesis true? Recent work on the supposed consequences of an open elite has already produced some doubts. Little credence, for example, is now accorded the idea that England’s late nineteenth

century economic decline resulted from absentee business owners too distracted by the demands of elite life to manage their firms properly. But, although the importance of an open elite to other major events has been severely questioned, it is only with a new work by Lawrence and Jeanne Stone that the openness itself has been confronted. Eschewing the tack of tracing the careers of successful entrepreneurs to gauge the openness of the elite, the Stones chose the alternative approach of analyzing the elite itself, and proceeded via the ingenious route of investigating country-house ownership.

Arguing that ownership of a country house was seen as essential for membership in the ruling elite, the Stones analyze the nature of country-house ownership in three counties for the period 1540- 1880. Their critical findings are extremely insightful: there was strikingly little change in the ownership of such houses throughout the period. Instead, even in the face of a demographic crisis (fewer marriages, declining fertility, rising infant mortality), the old elite was able to maintain itself, and its estates, intact for centuries through recourse to various marriage and inheritance strategies. The popular picture of venerable elite families overcome by debt and selling out to merchants is simply not borne out by the Stones’ findings.

**The tone of the passage suggests that the author regards the Stones’ methodological approach as** A. problematic

B. difficult

C. controversial

D. rigorous

E. clever

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. resolve a debate between two schools of thought.

B. Present research that questions an established view.

C. Describe and criticize a new approach. D. Defend a traditional interpretation against recent criticisms.

E. Analyze possible approaches to resolving a long-standing controversy.

**Which of the following best states the main idea of the passage?**

A. Assumptions about the nature of England’s ruling elite can no longer be used with certitude to explain many major economic developments.

B. The concept of the open elite is of paramount importance in explaining major English political, social, and economic events.

C. The long-standing belief that England possessed a remarkably open ruling elite has recently been subject of recent studies.

D. Although many possibilities are available, the most reliable means of testing the truth of the ‘open elite’ hypothesis is to analyze changes in the composition of the elite.

E. An analysis of English country-house ownership in England indicates that there were far too many opportunities for merchants to buy the estates of old members of the landed elite.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 15**

A majority taken collectively may be regarded as a being whose opinions and, most frequently, whose interests are opposed to those of another being, which is styled a minority. If it is admitted that a man possessing absolute power may misuse that power by wronging his adversaries, why should a majority not be liable to the same reproach? Men are not apt to change their characters by agglomeration; nor does their patience in the presence of obstacles increase with the consciousness of their strength. For these reasons we should not willingly invest any group of our fellows with that unlimited authority which we should refuse to any individual.

One social power must always predominate over others, but liberty is endangered when this power is checked by no obstacles which may retard its course and force it to moderate its own vehemence. Unlimited power is in itself a bad and dangerous thing, and no power on earth is so worthy of honor for itself or of reverential obedience to the rights which it represents that we should admit its uncontrolled and all

predominant authority. When the right and means of absolute command are conferred on a people or a king, on an aristocracy or a democracy, a monarchy or a republic, there has been implanted the germ of tyranny.

The main evil of the present democratic institutions of the United States does not arise, as is often asserted in Europe, from their weakness, but from their overpowering strength; the excessive liberty which reigns in that country is not so alarming as is the very inadequate security which exists against tyranny.

When an individual or a party is wronged in the United States, to whom can he apply for redress? If to the public opinion, public opinion constitutes the majority; if to the legislature, it represents the majority and implicitly obeys its injunctions; if to the executive power, it is appointed by the majority and remains a passive tool in its hands; the public troops consist of the majority under arms; the jury is the majority invested with the right of hearing judicial cases, and in certain states even the judges are elected by the majority. However iniquitous or absurd the evil complained about, no sure barrier is established to defend against it.

**In the passage, the author is primarily concerned with**

A. presenting the dangers inherent in a popular idea

B. contrasting two opposing views

C. advocating a specific course of action to solve a problem

D. reconciling an apparent conflict

E. proposing a solution to an unrecognized problem

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 16**

Many readers assume that, as a neoclassical literary critic, Samuel Johnson would normally prefer the abstract, the formal, and the regulated to the concrete, the natural, and the spontaneous in a work of literature. Yet any close reading of Johnson’s criticism shows that Johnson is not blind to the importance of the immediate, vivid, specific detail in literature; rather, he would emphasize the need for the *telling* rather than the merely *accidental* detail.

In other ways, too, Johnson’s critical method had much in common with that of the Romantics, with whom Johnson and, indeed, the entire neoclassical tradition, are generally supposed to be in conflict. Johnson was well aware, for example, of the sterility of literary criticism that is legalistic or pedantic, as was the case with the worst products of the neoclassical school. His famous argument against the slavish following of the “three unities” of classical drama is a good example, as is his defense of the supposedly illegitimate “tragicomic” mode of Shakespeare’s latest plays. Note, in particular, the basis of that defense: “That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism,” Johnson wrote, “will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal from criticism to nature.”

The sentiment thus expressed could easily be endorsed by any of the Romantics; the empiricism it exemplifies is vital quality of Johnson’s criticism, as is the willingness to jettison “laws” of criticism when to do so makes possible a more direct appeal to the emotions of the reader. Addison’s *Cato* is damned by Johnson; its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart.”

Even on the question of poetic diction, which, according to the usual interpretation of Wordsworth’s 1800 preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, was the central area of conflict between Romantic and Augustan, Johnson’s views are surprisingly “modern.” In his *Life of Dryden*, it is true that he defends the use of a special diction in poetry; but his reasons are all-important. For Johnson, poetic diction should serve the ends of direct emotional impact and ease of comprehension, not those of false profundity or grandiosity. “Words too familiar,” he wrote, “or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet.

From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things.” If the poetic diction of the neoclassical poets, at its worst, erects needless barriers between reader and meaning, that envisioned by Johnson would do just the opposite: it would put the reader in closer contact with the “things” that are the poem’s subject.

**The author of the passage is primarily concerned with**

A. defending a reputation

B. reconciling conflicting views

C. comparing two schools of thought

D. challenging an assumption

E. presenting new evidence in support of an established theory

**According to the passage, Johnson’s opinion of Addison’s *Cato* was**

A. Inflammatory

B. Self-contradictory

C. Negative

D. Adulatory

E. Bold

**Which one of the following statements best summarizes the main point of the passage?** A. Although some readers feel that Johnson’s

critical opinions at times resemble those of the neoclassical critics, his basic concerns are closer to those of the Romantics.

B. The usual classification of Johnson as a member of the Romantic school of criticism is based on an inaccurate evaluation of his critical theories and ideals.

C. The Romantic critics were mistaken in their belief that the critical ideas they formulated represented a departure from those propounded by Johnson.

D. Although many of Johnson’s critical opinions resemble those of the Romantic critics, his basic concerns are closer to those of the neoclassical critics.

E. Johnson’s literary criticism represents an attempt to unify the best elements of the neoclassical and the Romantic schools of criticism.

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 17**

The new school of political history that emerged in the 1960’s and 1970’s sought to go beyond the traditional focus of political historians on leaders and government institutions by examining directly the political practices of ordinary citizens. Like the old approach, however, this new approach excluded women. The very techniques these historians used to uncover mass political behavior in the nineteenth-century United States—quantitative analyses of election returns, for example—didn’t contribute towards analyzing the political activities of women, who were denied the vote until 1920.

By redefining “political activity,” historian Paula Baker has developed a political history that includes women. She concludes that among ordinary citizens, political activism by women in the nineteenth century prefigured trends in twentieth-century politics. Defining “politics” as “any action taken to affect the course of behavior of government or of the community,” Baker concludes that, while voting and holding office were restricted to men, women in the nineteenth century organized themselves into societies committed to social issues such as temperance and poverty. In other words, Baker contends, women activists were early practitioners of nonpartisan, issue-oriented politics and thus were more interested in enlisting lawmakers, regardless of their party affiliation, on behalf of certain issues than in ensuring that one party or another won an election. In the twentieth century, more men drew closer to women’s ideas about politics and took up modes of issue-oriented politics that Baker sees women as having pioneered.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. enumerate reasons why both traditional scholarly methods and newer scholarly methods have limitations

B. identify a shortcoming in a scholarly approach and describe an alternative approach C. provide empirical data to support a long-held scholarly assumption

D. compare two scholarly publications on the basis of their authors’ backgrounds

E. attempt to provide a partial answer to a long standing scholarly dilemma

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 18**

In an unfinished but highly thought-provoking series of essays, the late Sarah Eisenstein has focused attention on the evolution of working women’s values from the turn of the century to the First World War. Eisenstein argues that turn

of-the-century women neither wholly accepted nor rejected what she calls the dominant “ideology of domesticity,”; they took this and other available ideologies—feminism, socialism, trade unionism—and modified or adapted them in light of their own experiences and needs. In thus maintaining that wage-work helped to produce a new “consciousness” among women, Eisenstein to some extent challenges the recent, controversial proposal by Leslie Tentler that for women the work experience only served to reinforce the attractiveness of the dominant ideology. According to Tentler, the degrading conditions under which many female wage earners worked made them view the family as a source of power and esteem available nowhere else in their social world. Eisenstein’s study, differingly, insists that wage-work had other implications for women’s identities and consciousness. Most importantly, her work aims to demonstrate that wage-work enabled women to become aware of themselves as a distinct social group capable of defining their collective circumstance. Eisenstein insists that as a group, working-class women were not able to come to collective consciousness of their situation until they began entering the labor force, because domestic work tended to isolate them from one another.

Unfortunately, Eisenstein’s unfinished study does not develop these ideas in sufficient depth or detail. Whatever Eisenstein’s overall plan may have been, in its current form her study suffers from the limited nature of the sources she depended on. She uses the speeches and writings of reformers and labor organizers, who she acknowledges were far from representative, as the voice of the typical woman worker. And there is less than adequate attention given to the differing values of immigrant groups that made up a significant proportion of the population under investigation. While they do raise some really important questions, Eisenstein’s essays do not provide definitive answer, and it remains for others to take up the challenges they offer.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. criticize a scholar’s assumptions and methodology

B. evaluate an approach to women’s study C. compare two sociological theories D. correct a misconception about feminist theory E. defend an unpopular ideology

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 19**

Arboria is floundering in the global marketplace, incurring devastating losses in market position and profits. The problem is not Arboria's products, but Arboria's trade policy, which must change. Arboria faces the prospect of continuing economic loss until Arborian business and political leaders recognize the fundamental differences between Arborian and foreign economic systems. There is still chance to salvage the situation and the leaders must come forward to actively resolve every single issue that plagues the economy.

Arboria is operating with an obsolete trade policy, an artifact of the mid-1940s when Arboria and Whorfland dominated the global economy, tariffs were the principal obstacle to trade, and Arborian supremacy was uncontested in virtually all industries. In the intervening decades, economic circumstances have shifted radically, but sadly, Arborian trade policy has not.

Today, Arboria's trade policy seems paralyzed by the relentless conflict between proponents of “free” and “fair” trade. The free traders argue that Arborian markets should be open, and the movement of goods and services across national borders unrestrained. The fair traders assert that access to Arborian markets should be restricted until Arborian businesses are granted equal access to foreign markets. They contend that free trade is impossible while other nations erect barriers to Arborian exports.

Both are correct: fair trade requires equal access and equal access leads to free trade. But both sides base their positions on the same two outdated premises:

1. Global commerce is conducted under the terms of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and dominated by Arboria and similar economic systems abroad.

2. Multilateral negotiations are the most effective way to resolve pressing trade issues.

Both assumptions are wrong. The 40-year-old GATT now covers less than 7 percent of global commerce. World trade is no longer dominated by the free-trade economies; nearly 75 percent is conducted by economic systems operating with principles at odds with those of Arboria. Forging a multilateral trade policy consensus among so many diverse economic systems has become virtually impossible. And while multilateral talks drag on, Arboria misses opportunities for trade expansion.

**The passage is primarily concerned with** A. illustrating the erosion of Arboria's position in the world marketplace

B. examining the differences between “free” and “fair” traders

C. suggesting a reassessment of Arboria's trade policy

D. criticizing the terms of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

E. comparing the different economic circumstances of Arboria's trade partners

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Passage 20**

In the Sonoran Desert of northwestern Mexico and southern Arizona, the flowers of several species of columnar cacti—cardon, saguaro, and organ pipe—were once exclusively pollinated at night by nectar-feeding bats, as their close relatives in arid tropical regions of southern Mexico still are. In these tropical regions, diurnal (daytime) visitors to columnar cactus flowers are ineffective pollinators because, by sunrise, the flowers' stigmas become unreceptive or the flowers close. Yet the flowers of the Sonoran Desert cacti have evolved to remain open after sunrise, allowing pollination by such diurnal visitors as bees and birds. Why have these cacti expanded their range of pollinators by remaining open and receptive in daylight?

This strange evolution at the northernmost range of columnar cacti may be due to a yearly variation in the abundance—and hence the reliability—of migratory nectar-feeding bats. Pollinators can be unreliable for several reasons. They can be dietary generalists whose fidelity to a particular species depends on the availability of alternative food sources. Or, they can be dietary specialists, but their abundance may vary widely from year to year, resulting in variable pollination of their preferred food species. Finally, they may be dietary specialists; their abundance may be chronically low relative to the availability of flowers.

Recent data reveals that during spring in the Sonoran Desert, the nectar-feeding bats are specialists feeding on cardon, saguaro, and organ pipe flowers. Cactus-flower abundance tends to be high during spring; bat population densities, on the other hand, tend to be low except near maternity roosts. Moreover, in spring, diurnal cactus-pollinating birds are significantly more abundant in this region than are the nocturnal bats. With bats being unreliable cactus-flower pollinators, and daytime pollinators more abundant and therefore more reliable, selection favors the cactus flowers with traits that increase their range of pollinators. While data suggest that population densities of nectar-feeding bats are also low in tropical areas of southern Mexico, where bats are the exclusive pollinators of many species of columnar cacti, cactus-flower density and bat population density appear to be much more evenly balanced there: compared with the Sonoran Desert's cardon and saguaro, columnar cacti in southern Mexico produce far fewer flowers per night. Accordingly, despite their low population density, bats are able to pollinate nearly 100 percent of the available flowers.

**The primary purpose of the passage is to** A. compare the adaptive responses of several species of columnar cacti in the Sonoran Desert with those in the arid tropical regions of southern Mexico

B. discuss some of the possible consequences of the relatively low abundance of migratory nectar-feeding bats in the Sonoran Desert

C. provide a possible explanation for a particular evolutionary change in certain species of columnar cacti in the Sonoran Desert

D. present recent findings that challenge a particular theory as to why several species of columnar cacti in the Sonoran Desert have expanded their range of pollinators

E. compare the effectiveness of nocturnal and diurnal pollination for several different species of columnar cacti in the Sonoran Desert

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**Answer Key – RC Session 2: Primary Purpose** Detailed OCTAAVE based video solutions (to each of these passages) in RC Video 2, shared as part of Top-One-Percent GMAT courses (for registered courses only).

Passage 1 A E

Passage 2 B C

Passage 3 D

Passage 4 C

Passage 5 B B

Passage 6 B E

Passage 7 B

Passage 8 B

Passage 9 D

Passage 10 A

Passage 11 A

Passage 12 D

Passage 13 B

Passage 14 E B A

Passage 15 A

Passage 16 D C A

Passage 17 B

Passage 18 B

Passage 19 C

Passage 20 C

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**Expert solutions to selected queries asked by students**

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THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE EVER WRITTEN ON GMAT READING COMPREHENSION

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Passage 1**

**Additional context on the passage –** Overall the first paragraph says this - Rosenblatt’s work Black Fiction has treated its subject matter from a literary perspective versus a political one. This is quite the departure from other studies of the subject matter in the past. Then the passage gives an example. This is just an overall understanding hut should suffice.

The second paragraph says - fiction (the subject matter of the book) has political backdrops, but a critique of fiction (that is what the passage means by ‘criticism’) should come from not just political or ideological points of view. That defeats what fiction stands for and why it’s written. Essentially a literary lens should also be applied to it (connecting to the first paragraph). Then the author gives the example of the work at hand and says this work, because it applies a literary lens versus a political one, has put forth connections and patterns that other such analyses in the past haven’t.

Then the passage goes on.

Note – “However” in paragraph 3 is not a key contradiction word. It means regardless of how. It wants to say to write a criticism one has to give satisfactory answers (to whatever extent it may be). It is not giving contrast between two facts.

**Q2.**

**(E) –** Since his book is a critique of other authors' works. So, if he had been more thorough with his assessment, his work would have been even better. Appraise means assess.

**Passage 2**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Additional context on the passage –**

• First, the author introduces the view of "most economists," who think that "nothing seems good or normal that does not accord with the requirements of the free market." Also, the first line implies criticism because the author thinks these aren't good habits. For example: He seems captivated by Social Media, gambling, and pornography.

• These economists think that any form of price-fixing is "pernicious" (in other words, it has a negative effect).

• Then, the author argues against this view, stating that "in fact, price-fixing is normal."

In these first sentences, the author accomplishes a couple of things: first, he/she sets up a contrast: on one hand, there are the requirements of the free market. On the other hand, there is price-fixing.

Then, he/she makes the argument that "price-fixing is normal." This argument goes *against* the view of most economists.

Continuing on through the passage:

• The author explains how price-fixing occurs in modern industrial economies • In the next paragraph, the author argues that the free market is not the most efficient system, stating that in industrialized countries outside of the US, price-fixing is an overt practice that has not hindered economic development, i.e. the experience of nonsocialist countries other than the United States provides no support for the point of view of these economists.

• Finally, the author discusses socialist industrial economies: he/she thinks that the easing of regulations was NOT a "return to the free market." Instead, it just allowed Soviet firms to fix prices and argues that these economists are wrong in thinking that the Soviet Union has moved toward a free market.

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In all, this information serves to **support** the author's argument **against** the view of most economists.

Note – “Captivated” par se doesn't have a tone. However, consider these: “He is captivated by drinking, gambling, smoking, and late night partying, each leading to health deterioration.” / “I am captivated by Social Media and gaming, and, as a result, I end up wasting 12 hours each day.” → imply a negative tone.

**Q2.**

**Note –** ‘spiteful’ and ‘scornful’ are very strong emotions. Usually, passages in the business world will not have drastically strong emotions displayed. The author is not a fan of these economists for sure when it comes to this line of thinking, but the expression of that is not through ‘spite’ or ‘scorn’, but through ‘criticism’. Option (C) is the answer.

**Passage 3**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**To understand the tone of the passage –** In the last line: Thus, a move north would be seen as advantageous to a group that was already urbanized and steadily employed, and the **easy conclusion** (negative tone – means a conclusion drawn without paying attention to all facts) tying their subsequent economic problems in the North to their rural background ‘**comes into question’**. This (**calls/comes into question)** strongly implies **negative tone. ‘Easy conclusion’ implies** all the facts **are not being considered-implies negative tone.**

**Passage 4**

**Top 1% expert replies to student queries (can skip)**

**Additional context on the passage –** The author mentions secondary sources and says these people believed some reasons as to why recording Native American life stories was suboptimal.

**To understand the tone of the passage –** focus on the last line: “Despite all of this, autobiography remains a **useful tool (+ve tone)** for ethnological research: such personal reminiscences and impressions, **incomplete (-ve tone)** as they may be, are likely to throw more light on the working of the mind and emotions than any amount of speculation from an ethnologist or ethnological theorist from another culture.” This implies a **BALANCED TONE.**

Further, “There were, however, arguments against this **method (approach)** as a way of acquiring accurate and complete information...” is a fact.

**Primary Purpose –** The purpose of the passage is to review why the autobiographies are useful vs. why they are not. The author is just giving his views from outside the ring as one more participant.

Franz Boas's view & Paul Radin's views are used by the author to prove his point (that this method is inaccurate and provides incomplete information):

“Franz Boas, for example, described autobiographies as being “of limited value, and useful chiefly for the study of the perversion of truth by memory,” while Paul Radin contended that investigators rarely spent enough time with the tribes they were observing, and inevitably derived results too tinged by the investigator’s own emotional tone to be reliable"

"Despite all of this, autobiography **remains a useful tool (positive tone)** for ethnological research"- Author's opinion/point again.

Hence, Assess / Critique / Evaluate is appropriate. **Option (C) is the best.**

**(B) –** There is no misconception that is corrected in the passage. The passage says ethnologists began using method A to understand Native American culture. There are arguments against the use of method A -...(gives arguments). Still method A is useful because ...

So, the main point is to "evaluate method A".

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