

Lesson

4

K L E TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES

PROFESSIONAL APTITUDE AND LOGICAL REASONING

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Critical Reasoning

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So you're probably wondering why you need to be tested in logic and critical reasoning. Don't worry — the critical reasoning questions don't require any knowledge of formal logic. You won't be constructing syllogisms or using fancy Latin words for logical fallacies, like *ad hominem*. These test you on informal logic, which is a lot like the kind of reasoning you use to decide between a chocolate cake and an ice cream when at the pastry counter. The people who run the companies recruiting graduates want to make sure that their future employees can think clearly and carefully. That's where the critical reasoning question type comes in.

Critical reasoning questions test your ability to analyze an argument. The good news is that you analyze arguments all the time even though you may not know that's what you're doing. When you see a commercial advertising a new product that claims it'll make your life better, you probably question that claim. If a weight-loss drug helped someone lose 50 pounds, you ask, "Is that a typical result?" If four out of five dentists recommend a chewing gum, you say, "Did they ask only five dentists?" When a mutual fund boasts of its performance, you ask, "Is that better than the market average?" This is the same kind of thinking that you'll use to ace the critical reasoning questions.

Example:

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

Average hours of television viewing per American have rapidly increased for more than three decades.

To fight the rise in obesity, Americans must limit their hours of television viewing.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's conclusion?

(A) A person burns more calories while watching television than while sleeping.

(B) Over the last 30 years, there has been an increase in the number of fast food restaurants in America.

(C) Americans spend most of their television time watching sports events rather than cooking shows.

(D) Television viewing in Japan has also increased over the past three decades.

(E) Studies show that the number of television commercials that promote junk food has risen over the past ten years.

➔ To tackle this question, first identify the conclusion you're supposed to weaken and the premises the author states or implies to reach that conclusion. The conclusion's pretty easy to spot. The last thought of the argument is that Americans must limit their hours of television viewing to curb the rise in obesity. The author makes this judgment using the following evidence:

The author directly states that the number of television viewing hours has increased over the last 30 years.

According to the author, the number of obese Americans has also increased.

The author implies that television viewing causes obesity.

To weaken the argument that Americans have to reduce their television watching, you have to find the answer choice that shows that there's another cause for the rise in obesity.

You may have been tempted to choose A because it shows that television watching may be less fat-producing than another activity, sleeping. But it doesn't give you another reason for the rise in obesity. Answer A could be right only if it showed that Americans were sleeping more than they were thirty years ago. It doesn't, so move on. On the other hand, stating that during the same time period the number of fast food restaurants also increased introduces another possible cause of obesity and weakens the conclusion that Americans have to stop watching so much TV to get slimmer. Maybe it's the popularity of fast food that's the culprit! Answer B is a better answer than A, but read through all of the possibilities before you commit. C is wrong because there's nothing in the argument that suggests that the type of television Americans watch affects their obesity; nor does C show that viewing patterns have changed over the last three decades. You can eliminate C from contention. D is also out because it doesn't correlate what's happening in Japan with what's happening in America. You don't know whether Japanese citizens weigh more now than they did 30 years ago, so the information in D is useless.

If the question had asked you to strengthen the conclusion, E would be a good option. It shows a reason that increased television watching could cause obesity. But the question asks you to weaken the conclusion, so B is the best answer. It's the only one that shows another cause for the rise in obesity.

Question Types:

After you figure out a critical reasoning question's type, you know just how to deal with it. Most of the critical reasoning questions you'll encounter will fit into one of the following five categories:

- *Strengthening or weakening arguments:* The argument presents premises and a conclusion and asks you to evaluate the answer choices to determine which one would best strengthen or weaken the author's conclusion.
- *Drawing conclusions from premises:* The argument paragraph consists of a bunch of premises but doesn't provide a conclusion. Your job is to choose the best conclusion for the argument.
- *Seeking assumptions:* This more subtle type of question requires you to discover the premise the author doesn't state directly when reaching a conclusion but without which the conclusion isn't valid.
- *Making inferences:* For these less common question types, you have to surmise information that isn't directly stated, usually about one of the premises rather than the conclusion.
- *Finding the method of reasoning:* In these questions, you'll be asked to find an argument in the answer choices that uses the same method of reasoning as the original given argument.

Exercise A

1. A study of energy consumption revealed that homeowners living within 100 miles of the Gulf of Mexico used less energy from November 1 to April 30 than did homeowners in any other region of the United States. The same study found that from May 1 to October 31, those same homeowners used more energy than any other homeowners.

Which of the following, if true, would most contribute to an explanation of the facts above?

- (A) People who own homes near the Gulf of Mexico often own second homes in cooler locations, where they spend the summers.
- (B) Air conditioning a home is a more energy efficient process than heating a similarly sized home.
- (C) Homes near the Gulf of Mexico require very little heating during the warm winters, but air conditioners must run longer in the summer to cool the warm, humid air.
- (D) The average daily temperature is lower year-round near the Gulf of Mexico than in other areas of the United States.
- (E) Because of the large number of refineries located in the Gulf region, the price of energy there is less than in any other area of the country.

2. A conservation group is trying to convince Americans that the return of gray wolves to the northern United States is a positive development. Introduction of the wolf faces significant opposition because of the wolf's reputation as a killer of people and livestock. So that the wolf will be more acceptable to average Americans, the conservation group wants to dispel the myth that the wolf is a vicious killer.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the opposition's claim?

- (A) Wolves are necessary for a healthy population of white-tailed deer because wolves kill the weaker animals and limit the population to sustainable numbers.
- (B) In a confrontation, black bears are much more dangerous to humans than wolves are.
- (C) Wolves are superb hunters, operating in packs to track down their prey and kill it.
- (D) There has never been a documented case of a wolf killing a human in the 500-year recorded history of North America.
- (E) Wolves occasionally take livestock because domestic animals are not equipped to protect themselves the way wild animals are.

Questions 3 and 4 are based on the following information:

Tom: The unemployment rate has dropped below five percent, and that is good news for America. A lower unemployment rate is better for almost everyone.

Shelly: Actually, a low unemployment rate is good for most workers but not for everyone.

Workers are certainly happy to have jobs, but many businesses are negatively affected by a low unemployment rate because they have fewer applicants for jobs, and to expand their workforce, they have to hire workers they would not usually hire. The wealthiest Americans also privately complain

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about the inability to get good gardeners, housecleaners, and nannies when most Americans are already employed. So a low unemployment rate is not, in fact, good for America.

3. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument that a low unemployment rate is bad for business?

- (A) Businesses must pay skilled or experienced workers higher salaries when the unemployment rate is low.
- (B) The states don't have to pay unemployment compensation to as many workers when unemployment is low.
- (C) Higher unemployment generally means higher enrollment levels in college and graduate school.
- (D) Inflation can increase with low unemployment, making capital more expensive for any business seeking to expand.
- (E) Low unemployment rates generally mean that Americans have more money to spend on the goods and services created by American businesses.

4. Shelly's conclusion that "a low unemployment rate is not, in fact, good for America" relies on the assumption that

- (A) What is bad for businesses owners and the wealthy is bad for America.
- (B) Fluctuations in the unemployment rate affect the number of applicants for job openings.
- (C) Wealthy Americans rarely employ other Americans to clean their houses or as nannies for their children.
- (D) Business owners always want what is best for their workers even when it negatively impacts the bottom line.
- (E) Low unemployment hurts some workers because they would prefer to stay at home and collect unemployment checks.

5. A particular company makes a system that is installed in the engine block of a car and, if that car is stolen, relays the car's location to police via satellite. The recovery rate of stolen cars with this device is ninety percent. This system helps everyone because it is impossible for a thief to tell which cars it is installed on. For these reasons, insurance companies try to encourage customers to get this system by offering lower rates to those who have the system. Competing systems include brightly colored steel bars that attach to the steering wheel and loud alarms that go off when the car is tampered with. These systems simply encourage thieves to steal different cars, and when cars with these devices are stolen, the police rarely recovery them.

Which of the following is the most logical conclusion to the author's premises?

- (A) Insurance companies should give the same discount to car owners that have any protective system because their cars are less likely to be stolen.
- (B) The police shouldn't allow car owners to install the loud sirens on their cars because everyone simply ignores the sirens anyway.
- (C) Car owners with the system that relays location to the police should prominently advertise the fact on the side window of their cars.
- (D) Thieves should simply steal the cars with loud alarms or bright steel bars because those cars probably wouldn't also have the more effective system installed.
- (E) Insurance companies should give less of a discount, or no discount at all, to the siren and steering wheel systems because they aren't as effective as the relay system.

6. Companies X and Y have the same number of employees working the same number of hours per week. According to the records kept by the human resources department of each company, the employees of company X took nearly twice as many sick days as the employees of company Y. Therefore, the employees of company Y are healthier than the employees of company X.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the conclusion above?

- (A) Company X allows employees to use sick days to take care of sick family members.
- (B) Company Y offers its employees dental insurance and company X doesn't.
- (C) Company X offers its employees a free membership to the local gym.
- (D) Company Y uses a newer system for keeping records of sick days.
- (E) Both companies offer two weeks of sick days per year.

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7. New laws make it easier to patent just about anything, from parts of the human genome to a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Commentators are concerned about the implications of allowing patents for things that can hardly be described as “inventions.” However, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office believes that allowing for strong copyright and patent protections fosters the kind of investment in research and development needed to spur innovation.

Which of the following can be properly inferred from the statements above?

- (A) It was not possible in the past to patent something as common as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- (B) The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is more interested in business profits than in true innovation.
- (C) Investment in research and development is often needed to spur innovation.
- (D) The human genome is part of nature and shouldn't be patented.
- (E) Commentators who are concerned about too many patents aren't very well informed.

8. The total debt owed by America's households and businesses has increased dramatically in the last two decades. In 1990, the average credit card debt for each household with at least one credit card was \$2,966. By 2005, that amount had risen to \$9,205. In the same period, the number of bankruptcies filed in America nearly doubled. Clearly, increased credit card debt among Americans has led to the rising number of bankruptcy filings.

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's conclusion?

- (A) In addition to credit card debt, most people who file for bankruptcy have other large debts like medical or legal bills.
- (B) The bankruptcies mentioned in the argument include business bankruptcies, which account for a large percentage of all bankruptcies.
- (C) Increased housing values have also led to larger mortgages, but having large mortgages rarely leads to bankruptcy.
- (D) The citizens of other nations have much lower levels of debt and are much less likely to file for bankruptcy.
- (E) The average interest rate on credit cards is nearly 20 percent per year, and many Americans can only afford to pay the interest.

9. A researcher found that Americans work an average of three hours longer per week than French or German workers and about five weeks more per year. In total, Americans work over 1,800 hours a year while their French and German counterparts work less than 1,500 hours. This is because workweeks in many European countries are limited by the government and the government requires a minimum amount of vacation time. The researcher also found that American workers would like to work less, but only if their friends, colleagues, and competitors would also work less.

Which of the following conclusions is best supported by the information above?

- (A) Americans workers are more dedicated to their jobs than are French and German workers.
- (B) Americans are often outnumbered by vacationing Europeans in many U.S. national parks.
- (C) European workers are happier than are American workers.
- (D) American companies will outcompete European companies over the coming decades.
- (E) The best way to allow Americans to work fewer hours and take more vacation is through national legislation.

Questions 10–11 are based on the following:

Allen: Our state has a ten-cent deposit on all carbonated beverage containers. This ensures that plastic and glass bottles and aluminum cans are recycled. Your state should have a bottle deposit program.

John: My state has a comprehensive recycling program that features curbside recycling and recycling bins at highway rest stops, parks, and other public places. Studies have shown that comprehensive recycling programs more effectively encourage recycling than do bottle deposit programs alone. Therefore, my state should not adopt a bottle deposit program.

10. John's conclusion would be most weakened by which of the following?

- (A) Ten-cent bottle deposit programs are more effective than five-cent deposit programs.

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- (B) Americans in every state are much more likely to recycle now than they were in the 1970s when most deposit laws were passed.
- (C) Beverage bottles, on average, account for only 8 percent of the litter along highways and 4 percent of the solid waste in landfills.
- (D) Many states, including Allen's, have both a bottle deposit program and a comprehensive recycling program.
- (E) Bottle deposit programs and comprehensive recycling programs are more effective at encouraging recycling than are ad campaigns.

11. John would also like to argue that the deposit laws are unfair because they don't apply equally to all industries. Which of the following, if true, best supports that contention?

- (A) Citizens of some states pay bottle deposits while citizens of other states do not.
- (B) The bottle deposit collected in Allen's state only applies to carbonated beverages, not uncarbonated sports drinks, juices, and ice tea.
- (C) A two-liter bottle is counted as one container and is subject to only one deposit while a six-pack of cans requires six times the deposit.
- (D) People living near a state border may drive across the border to buy their beverages in a state that doesn't collect a deposit.
- (E) The deposit is charged on all carbonated beverages, including soft drinks from small, local companies, organic sodas, diet sodas, and even carbonated water.

12. The newest trend in home buying is interest- only mortgages. These mortgages require a borrower to pay only the interest on the loan. This means that the principle (which is the amount borrowed) never gets any smaller. Buyers never accumulate any equity in their homes and often have to default. Therefore, these loans are bad for Americans and should be made illegal.

The argument in the above passage depends on which of the following assumptions?

- (A) Homeowners can't afford to pay more than the interest on the loan.
- (B) Some things that are bad for Americans should be made illegal.
- (C) Interest-only mortgages don't require the buyer to pay more than the interest.
- (D) Buyers with no equity in their homes often have to default on their loans.
- (E) Owners won't accumulate equity based on the increasing value of their house.

13. The Earth's magnetic field has reversed a number of times in its history. Before the poles actually flip, the magnetic field weakens and the magnetic poles drift away from "true" north and south. On average, the magnetic north and south poles flip about once every 200,000 years. The last time the poles flipped was 780,000 years ago. Therefore, the poles are in the process of reversing.

Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the conclusion that the poles are reversing?

- (A) Magnetic north has recently been moving toward closer alignment with "true" north.
- (B) Sometimes the magnetic fields go for over one million years without reversing.
- (C) The earth's atmosphere has warmed about one degree Celsius over the past century.
- (D) The strength of the magnetic field has declined by over ten percent since 1845, the first year it was measured.
- (E) The location of the magnetic poles has remained unchanged for as long as magnetic compasses have been in use.

14. Obesity often leads to health problems, such as heart attacks, Type II diabetes, strokes, and cancer. A person who is considered clinically obese has a three-times greater chance of heart trouble. Obesity is also responsible for as many as 90,000 cancer deaths per year. The earlier a person becomes obese, the greater the health problems and risk of death. By the year 2010, it is predicted that half the children in North and South America will be clinically obese compared to about one-third of children in 2000.

The above premises most logically lead to which of the following conclusions?

- (A) Children will become more and more obese in the coming years.
- (B) Children in North and South America are more obese than children in Europe or Asia.

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- (C) Obesity that begins in childhood poses a greater risk of health problems and death than does obesity that begins in adulthood.
- (D) Today's children may be the first generation in centuries to have a shorter average life span than their parents.
- (E) Parents should not be concerned about childhood obesity because kids have plenty of time to lose the weight.

15. Healthy human beings can't tickle themselves. This is because they anticipate the sensation and reduce their touch perception accordingly. Reducing the perception of completely predictable sensations allows the brain to focus on crucial changes in the environment not produced by the person's own actions. A person who tries to tickle himself and is simultaneously tickled by another person will have a heightened sense of the other person's touch compared to his own. Healthy people also can't mistake their own voice as coming from another person. Schizophrenics, however, may hear their own voices and, having not anticipated the sounds, not recognize the voice as their own.

Which of the following statements can be correctly inferred from the passage above?

- (A) Human beings can't tickle themselves because they anticipate the sensation.
- (B) Further research in this area may lead to a better understanding of why certain people are more susceptible to tickling.
- (C) A healthy human hearing a tape of her own voice won't recognize the voice because she won't anticipate the sounds.
- (D) Tickling yourself as someone else is tickling you will reduce your sensory perceptions and cause you not to react to the tickling.
- (E) Healthy humans constantly anticipate the sound of their own voice and differentiate it from other voices.

16. One of the factors that the IRS considers when deciding whether to audit a tax return is the dollar amount of the deduction claimed for business travel. Salespeople and self-employed entrepreneurs often claim large deductions for mileage on their tax returns. If the IRS does decide to audit such a return, one of the things the auditors expect to see is a mileage log. Unfortunately, keeping mileage logs up-to-date can become a burden, and many busy people end up neglecting their mileage logs. The best solution to this problem is an electronic mileage log that runs on a personal digital assistant.

Which of the following is an assumption made in drawing the conclusion above?

- (A) The cost of the electronic mileage log is not too much for salespeople or the self-employed.
- (B) Keeping electronic mileage logs up-to-date is less of a burden than traditional pen and paper logs.
- (C) The IRS expects to see a mileage log whenever a large mileage deduction is claimed.
- (D) Salespeople and the self-employed already have personal digital assistants on which to run the electronic mileage logs.
- (E) Electronic mileage logs are preferred by the IRS because they can't be falsified.

Questions 17–18 are based on the following:

Sara: Anthropologists estimate that diseases brought to the Western Hemisphere by the first Europeans, including smallpox, hepatitis, typhus, and measles, killed 95 percent of the Native American population and allowed Europeans to begin their conquest of the continent. If the Native American population had been twenty times greater, only 4.75 percent of the population would have died, and the Europeans would never have been able to conquer North and South America.

Michele: Those death rates are way too high. The average rate of death in Europe from the most virulent epidemic in recorded history, the Black Death of the 14th century, was only 33 percent. Even if the Native American populations were extremely vulnerable due to their never having been exposed to these diseases, the cumulative death rate of all of the diseases should not have been more than 50 to 75 percent on average.

17. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken Michele's conclusion?

- (A) Native Americans generally lacked the enzyme that would allow them to digest the sugars in milk.
- (B) Knowledge of medicine in Native America was much more advanced than in Europe at the time of Columbus.

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- (C) At the time of Columbus, Native Americans were much less genetically diverse than Europeans, so there were fewer possibilities of natural immunity.
- (D) The death rates from the Black Death were higher than 33 percent in specific locations.
- (E) Diseases that quickly kill more than 75 percent of their infected hosts usually die off with their host's extinction.

18. Sara's argument relies on which of the following assumptions?

- (A) European technology was superior to the technology available to Native Americans at the time.
- (B) Diseases brought to the Western Hemisphere killed 95 percent of the Native American population.
- (C) The same number of Native Americans would have died of illnesses introduced by Europeans if the population of Native Americans had been twenty times greater.
- (D) Native Americans were the only people to be seriously affected by disease in the 1500s.
- (E) Diseases like smallpox, hepatitis, and measles were first brought to the Western Hemisphere by Europeans.

19. Employers lose millions of work hours from employees every year during the NCAA basketball tournament known as March Madness. The men's and women's tournaments are conducted simultaneously, and tens of millions of American workers enter contests where they pick the winner of each game. Because some early round games actually take place during work hours, many employees are constantly checking basketball scores instead of working. Even employees who don't watch basketball at any other time of the year get caught up in the excitement.

Which of the following is the most appropriate conclusion to the premises above?

- (A) The NCAA tournament is appropriately named because of the "madness" it creates among employees in March of every year.
- (B) Employees should not be allowed to check sports scores during business hours.
- (C) American businesses should indulge their employees during these two special weeks of the year.
- (D) The men's and women's NCAA tournaments combined form the world's most popular sporting event.
- (E) Everyone seems to have a different strategy for picking the winners, such as using team name, mascot, or uniform color.

20. Astronomers estimate that the new sunspot cycle will be 30 to 50 percent more active than the current cycle. Solar activity, including sunspots and solar flares, ejects huge quantities of charged particles into space. These particles are responsible for the phenomenon known as the aurora borealis, or "northern lights." The same particles also interfere with radio signals, disrupt satellite communications, and impede the transmission of power across high-voltage lines. Even though the new cycle of solar activity is predicted to be less intense than the peak cycle of a decade ago, the impacts will be felt by many more people around the world.

Which of the following, if true, would provide the strongest reason for the paradox of the weaker solar activity's causing greater disruption?

- (A) Radio signals have become stronger and less likely to be disrupted, but many people rely on a satellite signal for the music and news they hear on their radios.
- (B) There are actually fewer high-voltage power lines in the Upper Midwest than there were a decade ago.
- (C) There has been an exponential increase in the number of people around the world with cell phones that could be disrupted by solar activity.
- (D) The northern lights are usually seen only in the very highest latitudes, but during periods of intense activity, they can be seen as far south as Chicago.
- (E) Fiber optic cables that supply the Internet connections for tens of millions of Americans are not affected by solar activity the way that radio and satellite signals are.

21. The following advertisement appeared on behalf of a new breakfast cereal:

"Healthy-Oh's breakfast cereal is one-of-a kind good for you! Among breakfast cereals, only Healthy-Oh's has five grams of psyllium fiber. Psyllium fiber is good for your heart and helps you to lose weight.

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Doctors and nutritionists recommend at least twenty grams of fiber per day, so why not get twenty-five percent of your fiber the easy way with Healthy-Oh's cereal?"

Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the product's claim to be "one-of-a kind good for you"?

- (A) Healthy-Oh's is, in fact, the only cereal to use psyllium fiber.
- (B) Any fiber, including that found in many other cereals, has the same benefits to health as psyllium fiber.
- (C) Many doctors and nutritionists actually recommend at least twenty-five grams of fiber per day, and they base their recommendations on total calorie intake.
- (D) Another brand of cereal used to contain psyllium fiber, but it was not successful and is no longer on the market.
- (E) Psyllium fiber is also found in other products, such as powdered fiber supplements.

Questions 22 and 23 are based on the following passage:

Steve: Our Company manufactures a device that stores and plays electronic music. Customers buy music over the Internet and download it using our software. The downloaded music can be played on only our devices. This is because we have incorporated technology that prevents the music from being copied, which is necessary to protect the rights of the artists.

Justine: Music purchased and downloaded using your company's software should be compatible with other music devices manufactured by different companies. If a customer were to purchase a CD of the music, she would be able to play that CD in any brand of CD player. Your company is trying to create an unfair advantage by forcing consumers who download music using your popular software to also buy one of your electronic devices rather than another manufacturer's device.

22. Which of the following is an underlying assumption of Justine's conclusion?

- (A) Copyright protections are no longer necessary in the twenty-first century.
- (B) The electronic devices manufactured by Steve's company are not as well made as the devices made by other companies.
- (C) Other manufacturers of electronic music players don't also have popular software that customers could choose.
- (D) Customers who buy and download electronic music files using the Internet no longer purchase CDs.
- (E) Forcing customers who use the popular software created by Steve's company to also buy an electronic device from that company would create an unfair advantage.

23. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken Steve's argument?

- (A) If Steve's company didn't protect musical copyrights, it would be responsible to compensate artists for their lost revenues.
- (B) Effective copyright protections that would still allow music to be played on other manufacturers' devices could be employed.
- (C) Customers are extremely loyal to Steve's company and don't usually even consider buying other manufacturers' devices.
- (D) A single copy of a song downloaded using Steve's company's software can only be stored on one of his company's devices at any time.
- (E) No copyright protection is completely foolproof, and illegal software exists that can override the copyright protections used by Steve's company.

24. The ivory-billed woodpecker has been considered extinct for the past several decades. Recently, researchers claim to have found a pair of ivory-billeds in Arkansas. Their best evidence is a video that shows a large woodpecker flying away from the camera. The bird has the characteristic large white patches on the trailing edge of the wings. This is one of the factors that distinguishes ivory-billeds from the closely related pileated woodpecker. However, skeptics of the discovery argue that some abnormal pileateds can have extra white on the wing and that the bird in the video is most likely an abnormal pileated. They conclude that the ivory-billed has not been found and is still extinct.

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the skeptic's conclusion that the ivory-billed woodpecker is still extinct?

- (A) Before this discovery, the last reported ivory-billeds were seen in Louisiana.

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- (B) In the same area where the video was shot, researchers also heard the distinctive double-tap used by ivory-billeds.
- (C) The first person to discover the ivory-billeds was not a specialist, but professional ornithologists were soon brought in to confirm the identification.
- (D) Of the five key field marks that identify ivory-billeds, only the extra white on the wing has been seen and this is also the only feature that occurs on abnormal pileateds.
- (E) The bird in the video is clearly seen using the shallow wing beats of the ivory-billed rather than the deeper wing beats of the pileated.

25. The following is a concept plan developed by the Men's and Women's Professional Tennis Tour: "Television viewers around the world are becoming more interested in reality TV. In America, viewers flock to shows about people stranded on a deserted island, racing around the world, auditioning to become singing stars, or trying to find a spouse. Reality TV has caught on in other countries around the world as well. Tennis players are already popular for their appearance and personalities as well as for their tennis ability. Therefore, the Tennis Tour can become even more popular with TV viewers if we add some elements of reality TV to our broadcasts. As a first step, we will begin interviewing players before the matches and having coaches wear microphones during the matches."

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the conclusion that adding reality television elements will increase the popularity of tennis on TV?

- (A) TV viewers who occasionally watch tennis would be more interested if they knew more about the players.
- (B) The reality television elements will actually alienate much of tennis's current TV audience.
- (C) Personal information about the players is already widely available on the Internet and some of the websites of women's tennis stars are extremely popular.
- (D) The tennis stars are very enthusiastic about the changes because they feel like the increased exposure could lead to endorsements, modeling, and even movie roles.
- (E) The summer and winter Olympics have been using reality TV elements for many years.

26. The interior Western United States is sinking. The area of the U.S. between the Sierra Nevada mountains and the Colorado Plateau is known as the Basin and Range. This area has been sinking for millions of years due to expansion of the Earth's crust. The lowest point in North America, Death Valley, California, is part of the Basin and Range. Since the southern portion of the region is sinking much faster than the northern portion, places like Phoenix, Arizona, at just over 1,100 feet of elevation, are very low, and places farther north, like Reno, Nevada, at almost 4,500 feet of elevation, are higher. The fact that the elevation of the southern part of the region is getting progressively lower allows more moisture from the Gulf of California to bypass places like Phoenix and penetrate farther into the northern part of the region.

Which of the following is the most appropriate conclusion to the premises above?

- (A) Therefore, the region known as the Basin and Range will continue to expand into areas currently part of the Colorado Plateau.
- (B) As the northern portion of the region continues to sink, the southern areas of the region will receive more moisture.
- (C) Therefore, the drier climate of places like Phoenix is attributable to the compression of the Earth's crust.
- (D) The southern portion of the region includes areas that are very dry and well below sea level.
- (E) As the area continues to sink, Phoenix, Arizona, will become drier and drier, while areas to the north will receive more moisture.

27. Many names that people think of as Irish were actually brought to Ireland by the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in the 12th century. Names like Seamus, Patrick, and Sean are so widespread because of the Catholic Church's requirements that Irish sons and daughters be named after saints. Seamus is the Gaelic version of James, and Sean is the Gaelic version of John. Criminal laws in Ireland from the 1500s to the 1900s forbade parents from giving their children traditional Irish names like

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Cathal, Aodh, and Brian. Now that parents are free to do so, they should give their children these long-forgotten, traditional names that are truly Irish.

Which of the following inferences can be drawn from the above argument?

- (A) The author of the argument considers names like Aodh and Brian that were used in Ireland since before the 12th century to be “traditional.”
- (B) Irish parents prefer to give their children names that are as traditionally Irish as possible.
- (C) Parents in Ireland are now free to give their children any name that they choose.
- (D) The author of the argument feels that, even after hundreds of years of use, names like Patrick, Seamus, and Sean are still not “truly Irish.”
- (E) The author of the argument is still bitter about the introduction of non-Irish names into Ireland in the 12th century.

Questions 28 and 29 are based on the following:

Linda: You should bring a reusable mug. Foam plastic never decomposes. That cup you're drinking your coffee from will still be in the landfill in two hundred years!

Jane: I usually bring my own reusable plastic mug, but in the future, I might not have to feel so guilty about forgetting it. I just read that scientists have discovered that they can heat foam plastic to make liquid styrene, which is a certain kind of plastic that bacteria can eat. The bacteria store the carbon from the foam plastic in a form that ordinary bacteria in the soil can break down. The result is that less foam plastic ends up in the landfill; therefore, it's just as environmentally friendly for me to use this foam plastic cup as it is to bring my own mug.

28. If Linda wanted to weaken Jane's conclusion, which of the following, if true, would be her best response?

- (A) This special recycling process you describe requires energy, so the reusable mug is still more environmentally friendly.
- (B) Many coffee shops switched from foam plastic to coated paper cups long ago, even though the coated paper cups provide less insulation.
- (C) You should still bring your own mug with you because your mug provides superior insulation and keeps your coffee hot at least twice as long.
- (D) The real environmental problems associated with drinking coffee are in the tropics, where forests are continually being cleared to grow more coffee.
- (E) Most coffee shops and convenience stores consider it a refill if you bring your own mug and, therefore, charge only about half as much.

29. Jane's assertion that she may not have to feel so guilty about forgetting her mug in the future relies on which of the following assumptions?

- (A) She usually brings her reusable plastic mug with her, leading to a sense of guilt when she forgets it.
- (B) The re cycling process will take place in America and create good jobs for moderately skilled workers.
- (C) The process discovered by the scientists will turn out to be practical and cost-effective enough to become widespread.
- (D) Linda feels just as guilty when she forgets to bring her reusable cloth shopping bag when she goes to the grocery store.
- (E) There will be no additional advances in material technology that even further reduce the impact of using a disposable cup.

30. The standard computer keyboard, called QWERTY because of the arrangement of the first six letters, is very inefficient. The letters were arranged in this odd but familiar manner when the first typewriters were being designed in the 1800s. When keys were arranged logically, typists could strike the keys very quickly. Early typewriters were so slow the fast typists caused mechanical problems in the machines. In order to slow down the typists, the keys were rearranged in a seemingly random order. If a manufacturer of computer keyboards were to arrange the keys in the most efficient manner, everyone would want to buy a new, improved keyboard.

If true, which of the following would most seriously weaken the above conclusion?

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- (A) Modern computer word-processing systems are much faster than the most accomplished typist and there is no reason to use the slower keyboard.
- (B) Americans have universally adapted to the QWERTY keyboard and aren't interested in learning an entirely new system.
- (C) Discovering the most efficient arrangement of keys would require extensive tests on typists and non-typists alike.
- (D) The human brain is incredibly adaptable and can adapt to any arrangement of the keyboard, even if it is less efficient.
- (E) Computer keyboards include many keys that were not needed on manual or electric typewriters.

Exercise B

1. A fashion designer's fall line for women utilizing new soft fabrics broke all sales records last year. To capitalize on her success, the designer plans to launch a line of clothing for men this year that makes use of the same new soft fabrics. The designer's plan assumes that

- (A) other designers are not planning to introduce new lines for men utilizing the same soft fabrics
- (B) men will be as interested in the new soft fabrics as women were the year before
- (C) the designer will have time to develop new lines for both men and women
- (D) the line for men will be considered innovative and daring because of its use of fabrics
- (E) women who bought the new line last year will continue to buy it this year

2. Given that employees of the XYZ Company could, in theory, do their work at home, the company developed a radical plan to increase efficiency: eliminate office-space expenditures by having employees work at home. To evaluate this plan, XYZ's managers asked volunteers from the company's staff to try the arrangement for six months. There were several volunteers; significantly, their productivity during this period was as high as or higher than before.

Which of the following, if true, would argue most strongly against deciding, on the basis of the trial results, to implement the company's plan?

- (A) The employees who agreed to participate in the test of the plan were among the company's most self-motivated and independent workers.
- (B) The savings that would accrue from reduced office-space expenditures alone would be sufficient to justify implementation of the plan apart from any productivity increases.
- (C) Other companies that have achieved successful results from work-at-home plans have work forces that are substantially larger than that of XYZ.
- (D) The volunteers who worked at home were able to communicate with other employees as necessary for performing the work.
- (E) Recent changes in the way work is organized at XYZ's company offices have not brought about any productivity increases.

3. After its customers complained about being pressured to buy unneeded insurance, an insurance agency stopped rewarding its agents for high sales volume and instead gave them bonuses for high levels of customer satisfaction. Under this new plan, both customer satisfaction and the insurance agency's sales increased.

Each of the following, if true, helps to explain how the change in incentives for agents could have resulted in increased sales EXCEPT:

- (A) Customers were so pleased that the insurance agency had responded to their complaints that they recommended the agency to their friends.
- (B) Agents listened more closely to customers of long standing and were able to sell them additional insurance policies that met new needs.
- (C) Agents more frequently postponed completing the attendant paperwork even after the terms for an insurance policy were settled to the satisfaction of the client.
- (D) Dissatisfied customers of other agencies, attracted by the reports of the change in agency policy, became customers of the agency.
- (E) Having come to trust the increased judiciousness of the agents' recommendations, customers approached the agency to discuss and ultimately to buy more supplementary insurance than they previously had bought under pressure.

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

Taxpayer: But construction costs for ECC are much higher than for standard concrete, so your proposal is probably not justifiable on economic grounds.

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

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

5. Country Casa's lakes have been experiencing a constant deterioration in water quality due to too many visitors. Therefore, Casa has decided that the best way to save its lakes is by charging an extra fee to users of the lakes.

Which of the following is an assumption underlying the conclusion?

- (A) Changing global temperatures has been shown to be mostly responsible for the lakes' deterioration.
- (B) It is clear that charging higher fees will not be enough to stop the destruction of the lakes.
- (C) The level of the lakes in Country Casa has fallen by 20 centimeters per year over the last decade.
- (D) Camping at the lakes has never been prohibited.
- (E) Higher fees would actually deter a significant amount of people from visiting the lakes.

6. Consumer advocate: Your company's cars are likely to require major repairs in the third year after customers buy them. This shows that you intend for your cars to break down at the end of the two—year warranty period.

Car manufacturer: Our cars require fewer repairs in the first five years of ownership than our major competitor's cars do.

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

- (A) fails to address the issue of whether the car manufacturer's own cars are intended to break down after two years
- (B) assumes that the manufacturer and its competitor sell an equal number of cars
- (C) does not outline the steps the manufacturer takes to ensure its cars' longevity
- (D) treats the consumer advocate's argument as if it were about the relative cost of repairs rather than about their timing
- (E) merely contradicts the consumer advocate without offering any evidence that the advocate is wrong

7. A proposed rule requires the installation of guardrails on all traffic bridges in the state of Willericka. However, an engineer argued that because traffic accidents on bridges account for only 2 percent of all traffic accidents in Willericka, guardrails would do little to reduce the number of traffic injuries.

Which of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the engineer's argument?

- (A) Most drivers are ill—equipped to drive on bridges.
- (B) Since only a small portion of the state contains many bridges, the new rule would primarily affect that area.
- (C) The installation of warning signs on bridges costs significantly less than the installation of guardrails.
- (D) Willericka is known for its excellent emergency first responder services.
- (E) Traffic accidents occurring on bridges account cause significantly more injuries than those occurring anywhere else.