

Special Event: GMAT Terminator by Dustin

Reading Comprehension: Function Questions

What is “function question”?

Analysis-type evaluation questions require you to determine how parts of the passage work in relation to each other. These questions often ask about the **author’s purpose**. Unlike Main Idea questions about authors’ purposes, they do not ask you to identify the entire passage’s overall purpose, but rather the purposes of **specific elements** within the passage, and the **relationships among those purposes**. However, some evaluation questions may ask you to identify the logical structure of the passage or of a portion of the passage.

SOP for function question

- **STEP 1: Analyze the Context**
 - Carefully read the sentences **surrounding** the target content to understand its context.
- **STEP 2: Think About the Connection to the Article's "Ultimate Theme"**
 - What is the **direct connection** between this content and the core theme (ultimate theme) of the article?
 - If not **directly related**, how is it indirectly connected to **the ultimate theme**?
- **STEP 3: Identify Logical Relationships and Attitude**
 - Determine the logical relationship between this content and the surrounding text (e.g., cause and effect, contrast/transition, parallel, progressive, or other).
 - Discern the author's attitude when presenting this part of the content (e.g., objective, subjective, supportive, opposing, skeptical, etc.).

SOP for function question

- **STEP 4: Pre-formulate** a Tentative Answer (In Your Own Words)
 - Based on your understanding of the context, thematic connections, logical relationships, and author's attitude, try to predict or summarize the likely direction or content of the answer in your own words.
- **STEP 5: Examine the Options**
 - For each option, think in reverse:
 - "If this option were the correct answer, how would the original text need to be written to support this option?"
 - "Does such a way of writing match the actual content I am currently seeing in the article?"
 - Eliminate options that, if true, would require the original text to be expressed differently.
 - Choose the option that best aligns with the information in the original text and best answers the question.

Common Function Type

- **Providing Support or Explanation**
 - Supporting Evidence
 - Explaining/Clarifying
 - Citing Factors/Reasons
- **Challenging or Correcting**
 - Refuting/Questioning Arguments
 - Correcting Views
- **Acknowledging or Conceding**
 - Acknowledging Exceptions/Limitations
 - Suggesting/Cautioning
 - Calling Attention
- **Structuring or Concluding**
 - Introducing Contrasts
 - Summarizing/Stating

Common Trap

- **Content vs. Function:**
 - **DON'T** pick choices that describe “what is said.”
 - **DO** pick choices that explain “why it is mentioned.”
- **Logical Relationship Errors:**
 - Check if the content supports or opposes the main point.
 - Don't confuse support with refutation.
- **Wrong Target:**
 - Make sure the choice refers to the correct theory, argument, or person.
- **Temporal/Causal Errors:**
 - Don't confuse cause and effect.

Sample #1

For over a decade the most common policy advice given to developing countries by international development institutions has been to copy the export-oriented path of the newly industrializing countries, the celebrated NIC's. These economies—Brazil, Hong Kong, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan—burst into the world manufacturing market in the late 1960's and the 1970's; by 1978 these six economies, along with India, enjoyed unequaled growth rates for gross national product and for exports, with exports accounting for 70 percent of the developing world's manufactured exports. It was, therefore, not surprising that dozens of other countries attempted to follow their model, yet no countries—with the possible exceptions of **Malaysia and Thailand**—have even approached their success. In "No More NIC's," Robin Broad and John Cavanagh search for the reasons behind these failures, identifying far-reaching changes in the global economy—from synthetic substitutes for commodity exports to unsustainable levels of foreign debt—as responsible for a glut economy offering little room for new entrants. Despite these changes, the authors maintain, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund—the foremost international development institutions—have continued to promote the NIC path as the way for heavily indebted developing countries to proceed. And yet the futility of this approach should, according to the authors, be all too apparent so many years into a period of reduced growth in world markets.

Q3: The author mentions Malaysia and Thailand in order to

- A. acknowledge the appearance of implausibility in a broad claim
- B. concede the possible existence of counter-examples to a generalization
- C. offer additional evidence in support of a disputed conclusion
- D. illustrate the broad applicability of a hypothesis
- E. admit the limited scope of a standard analysis

Sample #2

According to conventional economic theory, the economic value of a good or service is determined by the extent to which individuals desire the good or service. For goods and services (such as groceries) that are soon "used up," and that are traded in well-functioning markets in which consumers understand the product and its benefits reasonably well, market valuations can readily be calculated. But calculating the economic value of ecological goods (natural resources) and services (such as wetland preservation or global climate control) is more difficult, since they may last indefinitely and are generally not traded in markets (no one owns the air or water). Nor do individuals well understand the personal benefits of natural resources and ecological services. To determine the value of such goods and services, economists ask individuals what they would be willing to pay in a hypothetical market—for example, the maximum fees that they would be willing to pay to use national parks. This approach is problematic not only because of individuals' imperfect understanding of the benefits to themselves but also because of its inability to address **possible future changes** in people's willingness to pay for ecological goods and services. Moreover, individuals' willingness to pay for natural resources may depend on such factors as whether the expense is borne by all taxpayers or only by those individuals who pay user fees.

The author of the passage mentions "possible future changes" in the highlighted text most likely in order to

- ~~A. caution against the assumption that taxes are the best way to pay for many ecological goods and services~~
- B. cite** a factor that could affect economists' calculations of the economic value of ecological goods and services
- ~~C. explain why some economists are attempting to develop new methods for calculating the monetary value of ecological goods and services~~
- ~~D. suggest that people are likely to become more aware of the personal benefits of natural resources and ecological services~~
- ~~E. point out that ecological goods and services are likely to become increasingly costly~~

Sample #3

Organizations that produce similar goods tend to concentrate in the same geographic area (geographic concentration of production). Economic explanations of such industrial agglomeration explicitly emphasize better performance, and implicitly emphasize lower failure rates, as the key processes contributing to this geographic concentration. Sometimes industries benefit economically from situating themselves in particular locations that offer intrinsic advantages such as access to scarce raw materials or proximity to consumers. In other cases, regardless of the particular location, the colocation of structurally equivalent organizations—those that operate in the same markets—may itself yield advantages such as common labor markets and knowledge spillovers.

Sorenson and Audia point out that these explanations ignore the fact that structurally equivalent organizations also compete with one another for vital resources, and colocation would be expected to increase such competition. Organizational ecology studies support this expectation by showing that organizations apparently compete more intensely within local population boundaries.

Sorenson and Audia propose instead that what maintains geographic concentration is entrepreneurial opportunity, which leads to higher founding rates. Dense local concentrations of structurally equivalent organizations increase the pool of potential entrepreneurs in a region. Beginning entrepreneurs need exposure to existing organizations in the industry to acquire knowledge of the business, ties to scarce resources, and self-confidence. The existing geographic concentration of production constrains access to these resources, so that new foundings tend to reinforce geographic concentration.

2. The author of the passage mentions common labor markets in the highlighted text most probably in order to
- A. point out one area in which structurally equivalent organizations must compete for resources
 - B. elaborate a contrast between industries that exhibit geographic concentration of production and those that do not
 - C. undermine the argument that industries benefit economically from situating themselves in particular locations
 - D. highlight an advantage that can be shared by structurally equivalent organizations that are not situated near each other
 - E. provide an example of an advantage of geographic concentration that is not intrinsic to a particular location

Sample #4

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.

Sample #4

2. In the last sentence of the passage, the author refers to "recent archaeological discoveries" (lines 36-37) 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) ~~cast doubt 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

5. The passage mentions the extinction of species other than large animals (see highlighted text)[Nor were extinctions confined to large animals: small animals, plants, and insects disappeared] most probably in order to

- ~~(A) suggest that the Paleo~~indians were responsible for more extinctions than Martin's theory assumes
- ~~(B) provide support for the speculation that~~ humans arrived in North America significantly earlier than the end of the Pleistocene era
- ~~(C) point out the only area in which~~ Martin, Krech, and White agree concerning the circumstances of the Pleistocene extinctions
- (D) cite additional evidence tending to support Krech's conclusions about the role of humans in the Pleistocene extinctions
- (E) raise a question about the logical consistency of Krech's view of Martin's theory

Sample #5

Native American women of the Greater American Southwest understood ceramic technology long before they began manufacturing ceramic containers. Ceramic containers appeared over a millennium after the introduction of agriculture among southwestern Native American groups that had previously relied solely upon foraging, and approximately eight hundred years after the archaeological record indicates ceramic figurines first appeared in the region. To explain this lag, anthropologist James Brown proposed that the manufacture of ceramic containers began as these groups became increasingly sedentary and more reliant upon agriculture and developed greater need for storage containers. He argued further that since pottery making fit easily into women's schedules, the labor of making containers had negligible costs. Subsequent research has shown that pottery making exacerbated the scheduling problems of women, whose child-care responsibilities, foraging activities, and other **contributions to subsistence** were already greater than during the preceramic period. Other evidence, however, does seem to support Brown's argument that increased need for containers was important to the inception of pottery making. Pottery containers provided a means of storing and cooking food that enhanced **the nutritional yield of a given crop**. As southwestern populations became more reliant on agriculture for subsistence, they had to increase their crops' nutritional yield, since **low population densities** impeded expansion of field systems.

The author of the passage mentions the contributions of women to subsistence in the highlighted text most likely in order to

- A. show how evidence contradicts one aspect of Brown's argument
- B. explain why vessel manufacture began when it did
- C. show that foraging and agriculture were both essential to Native American groups
- D. correct a mistaken view about child-care practices
- E. explain women's increased need for containers

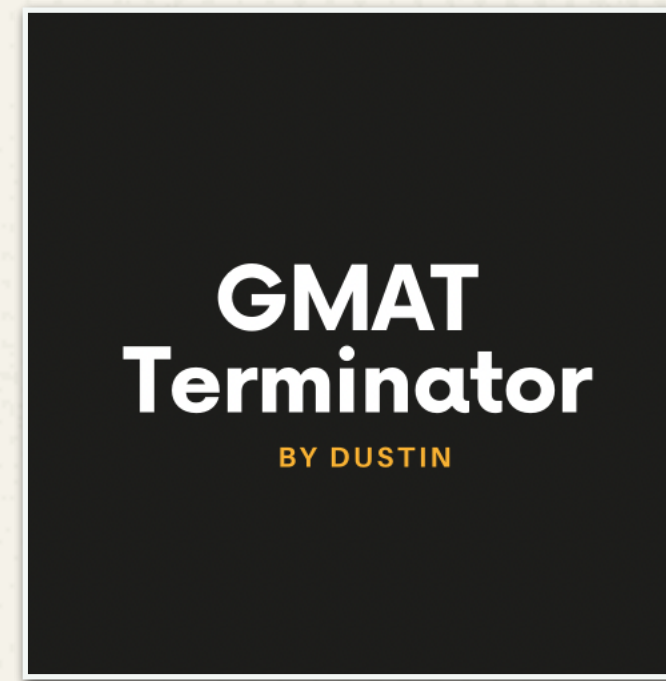
Sample #5

The author of the passage mentions the effect of ceramic containers on nutritional yields of crops most likely in order to suggest

- A. a reason for changes in density among southwestern Native American populations
- B. a reason for the increased reliance of southwestern Native American populations on agriculture
- C. a reason for the lag in container manufacture among southwestern Native American populations
- D. one incentive for container manufacture among southwestern Native American populations
- E. the likelihood of scheduling problems for southwestern Native American women

The author of the passage mentions low densities among southwestern Native American populations most likely in order to

- A. suggest why Native Americans did not need to expand their field systems
- B. imply that nutritional yields from crops did not need to be increased
- C. provide evidence to support one part of Brown's argument about the origin of ceramic containers
- D. account for the fact that southwestern Native American populations gradually became more sedentary
- E. give an example of a factor that has been cited as accounting for the lag in vessel manufacture by southwestern Native Americans



Remember:

Not the literal content, but the true intention behind the author's writing.

See you at:

GMATTerminator.site

Analysis.GMATTerminator.site

AI.GMATTerminator.site

For Quizzes, Assignments, and Discussions!