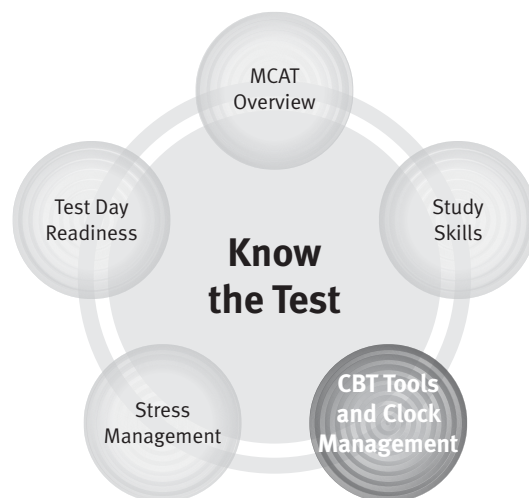# LESSON 8.3

CBT Tools and Clock Management

In this lesson, you'll learn to:

- Use the CBT tools provided on the MCAT effectively
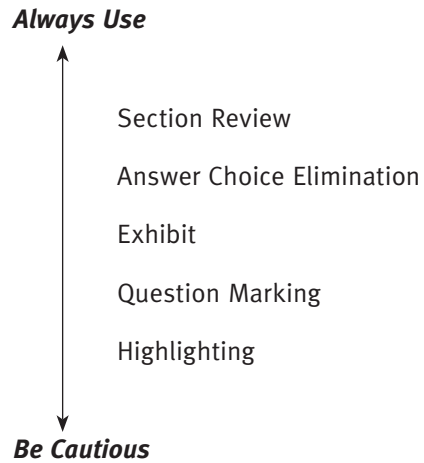- Execute a clock-monitoring strategy that promotes efficiency and prevents distractions

MCAT Overview

Test Day Readiness

Know the Test

Study Skills

Stress Management

CBT Tools and Clock Management

LESSON 8.3, LEARNING GOAL 1:

• Use the CBT tools provided on the MCAT effectively

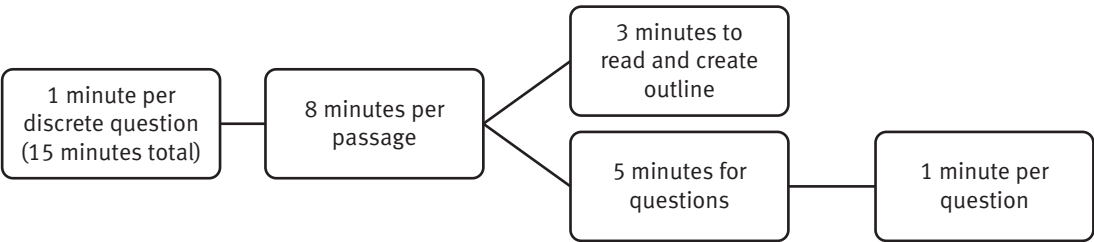**How should you prioritize the use of CBT tools on Test Day?**

Always Use

Section Review

Answer Choice Elimination

Exhibit

Question Marking

Highlighting

Be Cautious

LESSON 8.3, LEARNING GOAL 2:

- Execute a clock-monitoring strategy that promotes efficiency and prevents distractions

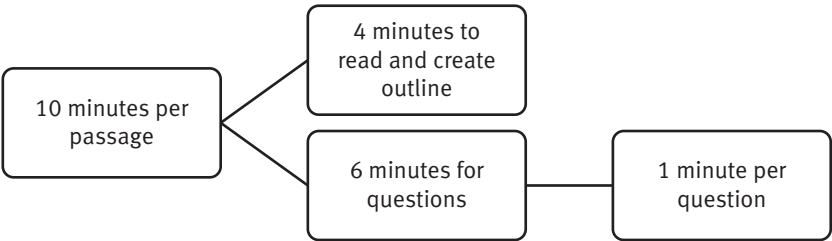| Good Habits	Bad Habits

Facts About the Test Clock

Science Sections

```
1 minute per            8 minutes per  ┌─ 3 minutes to read and create outline
discrete question  ─── 
(15 minutes total)     passage         └─ 5 minutes for questions ─── 1 minute per question
```

CARS Section

```
                     ┌─ 4 minutes to read and create outline
10 minutes per  ───
passage              └─ 6 minutes for questions ─── 1 minute per question
```

KAPLAN TIP

Note that the times covered above represent an average across the entire exam. Some passages and questions may go more quickly than others. It is exactly for this reason that pacing is so important.

Section Pacing

Science Sections	Section Progress	CARS Section
95 minutes	Start	90 minutes
80 minutes	Discretes Finished	—
72 minutes	1	80 minutes
64 minutes	2	70 minutes
56 minutes	3	60 minutes
48 minutes	4	50 minutes
40 minutes	5	40 minutes
32 minutes	6	30 minutes
24 minutes	7	20 minutes
16 minutes	8	10 minutes
8 minutes	9	0 minutes
0 minutes	10	—

KAPLAN TIP

These timing benchmarks are averages and, ideally, you will be working slightly ahead of these numbers on Test Day so you have a few minutes of buffer time at the end of each section to go back to difficult or marked questions (or just for peace of mind).
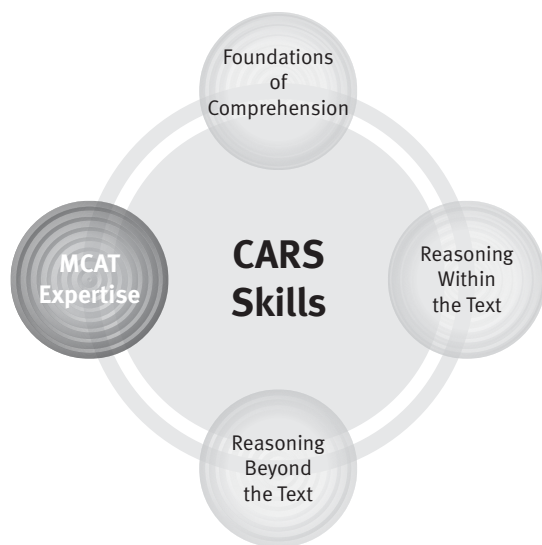
LESSON 7.2

Wrong Answer Pathologies

In this lesson, you'll learn to:

- Recognize common wrong answer pathologies for questions in the Critical Analysis and Reasoning section

Foundations of Comprehension

MCAT Expertise

CARS Skills

Reasoning Within the Text

Reasoning Beyond the Text

LESSON 7.2, LEARNING GOAL 1:

- Recognize common wrong answer pathologies for questions in the Critical Analysis and Reasoning Section.

Identifying Wrong Answer Pathologies

Before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 some examples of the laws in place to disenfranchise minority voters were literacy tests, poll taxes, property ownership requirements, and "good character" tests. Even though these laws took away voters' rights and were a clear violation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the Supreme Court usually upheld them under the protection of states' rights. Nevertheless, Civil Rights advocates and other interested parties usually attempted to circumvent these laws with the establishment of other laws, the most common of which were grandfather clauses that preserved suffrage for otherwise disenfranchised parties.

1. According to the passage, which of the following was used to prevent the disenfranchisement of minority voters before the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

Wrong Answer Choice	FUD	OPP	OS	DIST/EXT
The passing of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments				
Abolishing grandfather clauses				
Abolishing all grandfather clause laws				
The Civil Rights Act of 1964				
Counteracting and repealing literacy tests and poll taxes				
Civil Rights advocacy geared toward non-minority voters				
Supreme Court rulings about who could and couldn't vote				

FUD = faulty use of detail; OPP = opposite; OS= out of scope; DIST/EXT = distortion or extreme

Which word/phrase makes it wrong?

2. What measures were taken to disenfranchise minority voters before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed?

Literacy tests, poll taxes, property ownership requirements only

Civil Rights leaders advocating for enforcement of "good character" tests

The passing of laws that were technically legal according to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments

Racial discrimination initiatives set forth by the Supreme Court

States passing laws such as the grandfather clauses

Suppression of states' rights by the Supreme Court

KAPLAN TIP
Although it is important to identify the correct answer based on your prediction, recognizing and eliminating wrong answer choices is a skill you need to practice in order to choose the best answer on Test Day.

LESSON 7.2 REVIEW

Wrong Answer Pathologies

Faulty Use of Detail (FUD)
- Is wrong because
  - It misrepresents information in the passage
  - It does not answer the question that was asked
- Is tempting because
  - It has information that is easily recognizable from the passage
- Is recognizable by
  - Passage detail in an incorrect context

Opposite (OPP)
- Is wrong because
  - It is the exact opposite concept/idea from the correct answer
- Is tempting because
  - It will look very similar to a good prediction for the question
- Is recognizable by
  - A single word or phrase that will negate the answer (i.e., no, not, un-)

Out of Scope (OS)
- Is wrong because
  - It does not cover the same content areas as the passage
- Is tempting because
  - It will be within the overall topic of the passage
- Is recognizable by
  - The inclusion of information that is not mentioned in the passage at all
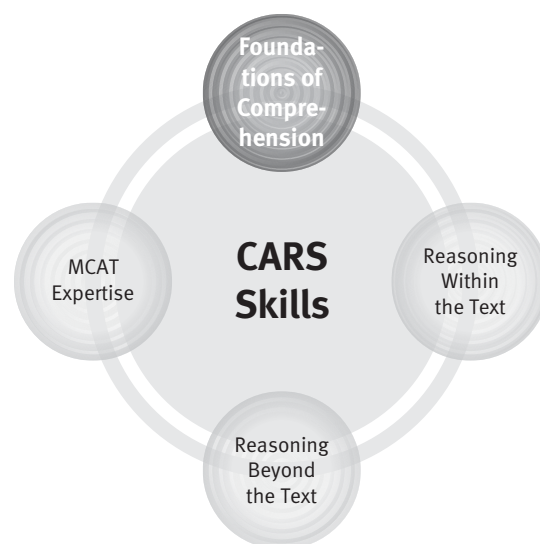
Distortion or Extreme (DIST/EXT)
- Is wrong because
  - It manipulates the author's focus or meaning in an extreme or distorted way
- Is tempting because
  - It will look very similar to the correct answer except for one word or phrase
- Is recognizable by
  - A single word or phrase that distorts the answer (i.e., always, only, must, should)

CARS Questions: Foundations of Comprehension

In this lesson, you'll learn to:

- Answer Main Idea questions
  - Identify the main idea of an MCAT CARS passage
- Answer Detail questions
  - Find the correct answer to a Detail question in a passage, and match it with an answer choice
- Answer Function questions
  - Determine the role of a portion of text as it relates to the passage as a whole
- Answer Definition-in-Context questions
  - Identify the meaning of a word or phrase in the context of where it appears in the passage

Founda-tions of Compre-hension

MCAT Expertise

CARS Skills

Reasoning Within the Text

Reasoning Beyond the Text

MCAT STRATEGY—CARS QUESTIONS

ASSESS THE QUESTION
Read the question (NOT the answers), looking for clues to the about difficulty.

PLAN YOUR ATTACK
Think about question type, your outline, and researching the passage.

EXECUTE THE PLAN
Predict what you can about the answer.

ANSWER BY MATCHING, ELIMINATING, OR GUESSING
Find the right answer in the answer choices.

LESSON 6.2, LEARNING GOALS 1–4:

- Answer Main Idea questions
  - Identify the main idea of an MCAT CARS passage
- Answer Detail questions
  - Find the correct answer to a Detail question in a passage, and match it with an answer choice
- Answer Function questions
  - Determine the role of a portion of text as it relates to the passage as a whole
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  - Identify the meaning of a word or phrase in the context of where it appears in the passage

CARS Question Types Map
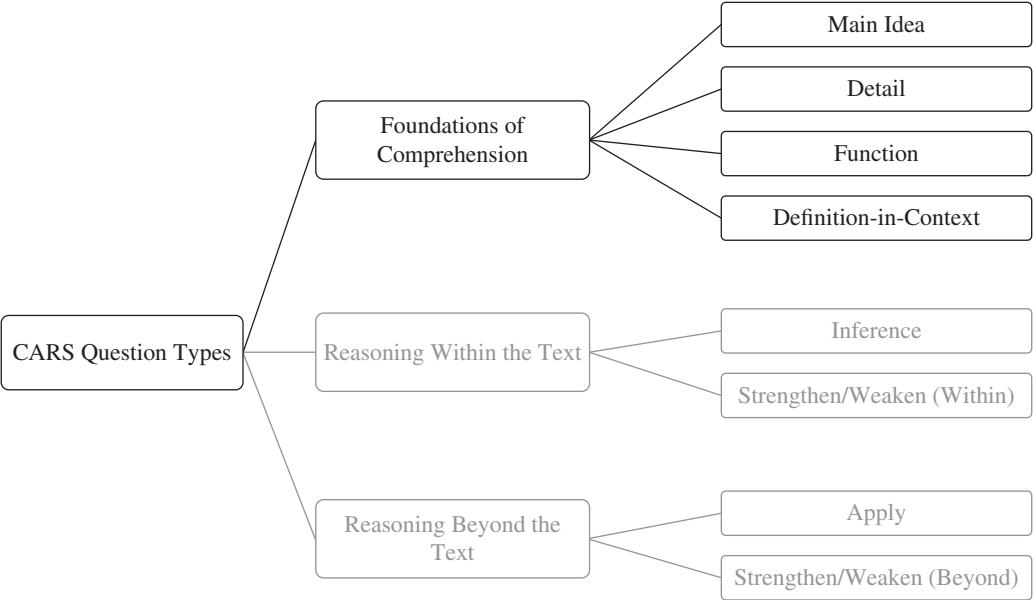
Foundations of Comprehension Introduction Passage (Questions 1–4)

Visual art—drawing, painting, sculpture, and the like—holds a clear place and process in the mind of the general public. To clarify, I mean that the average person knows how a painting, for instance, is created, but the workings of other disciplines that craft visual experiences are less clear to the average member of their audience. The popular perception of these hard-working artists becomes the default: a hand wave of, "Oh, I'm sure it comes together somehow." This sentiment becomes progressively stronger as the creation in question becomes more collaborative, and as the final visual product is less of the audience's primary engagement with the work as a whole.

Theatrical design lies at the extreme of both the above trends: in addition to theater's status as one of the definitive collaborative art forms, the strictly visual aspects of a performance—scenic, costume, and lighting design—are not generally "why [one] goes to the theater." Because of the latter point in particular, these design aspects exist as nothing more than a subordinate credit in a play's program to most theatergoers, even as modern technology and production values allow them to be an ever-larger part of the experience.

Needless to say, designers for the performing arts (which include dance and opera as well as theater) can bring a strong and definitive artistic voice to a work; and that voice is often nuanced and masterful. My own scenic design professor, who is now a Tony Award winner for his craft, was six-foot-four, with a build that would be placed by popular stereotype as more football player than dollhouse maker. But his giant hands would spend countless hours building miniature, astonishingly lifelike sets and stages out of cardstock and gesso.

Main Idea Question

1. The central idea of the passage is:

    A. that the author's professor worked at the top of his field.
    B. that most visual art is misunderstood by the public.
    C. that theater is an art form equal to more popular forms.
    D. that some art requires more effort and skill than most people assume.

Detail Question

2. Which of the following is stated by the author regarding an audience's typical attitude toward theatrical productions?

    A. The audience does not notice visual design during a production.
    B. A Tony Award increases the appeal of a production.
    C. Scenic design is more noticeable than costume design.
    D. Visual design is not the primary motivation to attend a production.

Function Question

3. Drawing, painting, and sculpture are used by the author as examples of what?

    A. Reasons why theatergoers attend a production
    B. Arts whose creation process is well understood
    C. Collaborative visual art forms
    D. Crafts in which the author is trained

Definition-in-Context Question

4. In the context of the passage, "the default" (paragraph 1) most precisely means which of the following?

    A. A mistake made when attention is not paid
    B. An opinion held as a result of little thought
    C. A failure to repay a debt in a timely manner
    D. An original, natural state of a work of art

KAPLAN TIP

These question types may require less reasoning than others in the CARS section, but it's still important to move through them as quickly as possible to save time for other questions in the section.

Foundations of Comprehension Practice Passage (Questions 5–9)

Visual art—drawing, painting, sculpture, and the like—holds a clear place and process in the mind of the general public. To clarify, I mean that the average person knows how a painting, for instance, is created, but the workings of other disciplines that craft visual experiences are less clear to the average member of their audience. The popular perception of these hard-working artists becomes the default: a hand wave of, "Oh, I'm sure it comes together somehow." This sentiment becomes progressively stronger as the creation in question becomes more collaborative, and as the final visual product is less of the audience's primary engagement with the work as a whole.

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The models demanded absolute perfection and detail, because while the miniature is not the final product of the show itself, it is the final product of the designer. His role is to make a complete visualization of the stage and set dressings as the audience will experience it, but also to convey that vision in such a way that it can be duplicated by others who are tasked to build the full-size version out of plywood, metal, screen projections, or whatever is best dictated by the budget and practicalities of the production.

That flexibility given to the actual scene-builders is the heart of what makes breathtaking visual theater, and it also exposes a key tenet of collaborative art in general. The operant word is specialization: the scene is designed by a man or woman with an eye for weight, color, composition, and dramatic function; but it is then constructed by a team that knows how to build, fly, and weld. As an example, consider a designer who demands a bucking and swaying boat for the opening scene of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The designer will build a model with each plank on the boat just so, and that rocks back and forth to the exact angle desired of the final product. The exact mechanism of that rocking, on the other hand, whether it be hydraulic platforms, sophisticated video projections, or ultra-strong cables from the fly space above, is left to the engineers, carpenters, and technicians in the "scene shop." Compromises on the initial design may, of course, have to be made, but they are normally handled in consultation with the director and the designers, and especially in today's big-budget Broadway productions such scope adjustments are cut to an absolute minimum.

Passage Outline

P1.

P2.

P3.

P4.

P5.

Goal:

5. The passage cites the amount of money spent on a production as influencing all of the following EXCEPT:

   Question Type:

   A. the degree to which visual design can contribute to an audience's experience.
   B. the precise way in which a designer's vision is executed by the scene shop.
   C. the scope of a designer's vision as she delivers it to her colleagues.
   D. the amount by which a designer's vision is reduced during production.

6. The author mentions the size of the scenic design professor's hands to:

   Question Type:

   A. scoff at the mismatched traits of the professor.
   B. emphasize the professor's skill at model-building.
   C. make a contrast between expectation and reality.
   D. clarify how audience members feel watching a play.

7. "Visualization" (paragraph 4) is used in the passage to mean:

   Question Type:

   A. a physical portrayal of an idea.
   B. the mental image of a design concept.
   C. the final visual representation of an artistic work.
   D. forming a vision of future success.

KAPLAN TIP

Detail questions will likely be the most common question type you see in the Foundations of Comprehension category of CARS questions.

Foundations of Comprehension Practice Passage (Questions 5–9)

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8. The author describes a possible opening scene of *The Tempest* in the passage, along with the process by which it might be created. For which of the following concepts found elsewhere in the passage does this example serve as a counterpoint?

    Question Type:

    A. "hand wave" (paragraph 1)
    B. "collaborative art" (paragraph 2)
    C. "complete visualization" (paragraph 4)
    D. "popular stereotype" (paragraph 3)

9. Based on the passage, which of the following is a responsibility of directors in creating a theatrical production?

    Question Type:

    A. Building models of what a play's set will look like
    B. Negotiating whether designers' visions will be simplified during production
    C. Acting as a manager to the actors who perform onstage
    D. Deciding how all elements of a production will be executed together on stage

---

KAPLAN TIP

When passage references are given in a question stem, use them! There's no reason to over-think a question and tax your memory when the test itself is pointing you to the right place. Remember, though, to read text surrounding the quotation as well, so you see the context of the reference.

LESSON 6.2 REVIEW

CARS Skill 1: Foundations of Comprehension
Question Types

Main idea

- Answer will be the author's overall purpose
- Often will match the goal from your passage outline

Detail

- Demands a detail from the passage, sometimes paraphrased
- Passage outline and (optionally) highlighting will help

Function

- Asks *why* an author has included a detail or structure
- Answer will often match with your passage outline for the paragraph

Definition-in-Context

- Asks for meaning of a word or phrase, usually with a passage reference
- Don't fall for trap answers that are common (but incorrect) definitions

CARS Questions: Reasoning Within the Text

In this lesson, you'll learn to:

- Answer Inference questions
  - Identify the unstated parts of arguments in passages
- Answer Strengthen/Weaken (Within Passage) questions
  - Find text from the passage that produces the desired effect
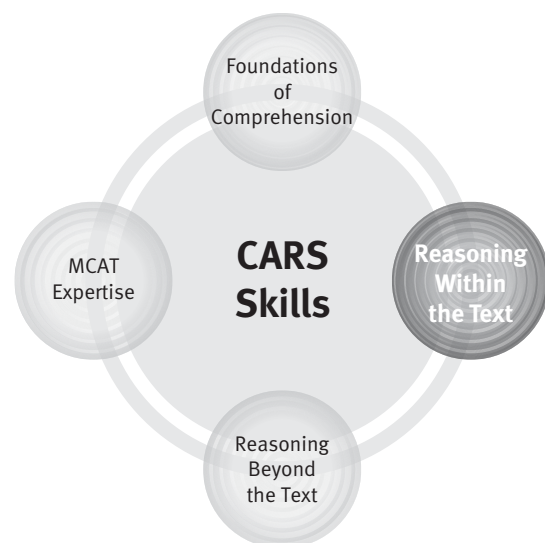
MCAT STRATEGY—CARS QUESTIONS

ASSESS THE QUESTION
Read the question (NOT the answers), looking for clues to the about difficulty.

PLAN YOUR ATTACK
Think about question type, your outline, and researching the passage.

EXECUTE THE PLAN
Predict what you can about the answer.

ANSWER BY MATCHING, ELIMINATING, OR GUESSING
Find the right answer in the answer choices.

LESSON 6.3, LEARNING GOALS 1 AND 2:

- Answer Inference questions
  - Identify the unstated parts of arguments in passages
- Answer Strengthen/Weaken (Within Passage) questions
  - Find text from the passage that produces the desired effect

CARS Question Types Map
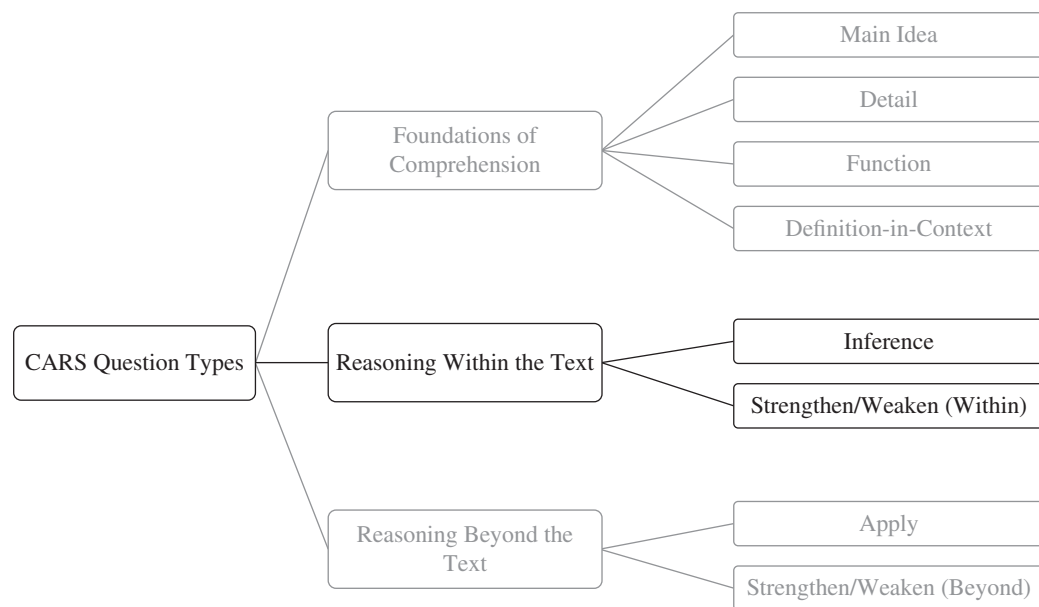
Reasoning Within the Text Introduction Passage (Questions 1–2)

If one always ought to act so as to produce the best possible circumstances, then morality is extremely demanding. No one could plausibly claim to have met the requirements of this "simple principle." It would seem strange to punish those intending to do good by sentencing them to an impossible task. Also, if the standards of right conduct are as extreme as they seem, then they will preclude the personal projects that humans find most fulfilling.

From an analytic perspective, the potential extreme demands of morality are not a "problem." A theory of morality is no less valid simply because it asks great sacrifices. In fact, it is difficult to imagine what kind of constraints could be put on our ethical projects. Shouldn't we reflect on our base prejudices, and not allow them to provide boundaries for our moral reasoning? Thus, it is tempting to simply dismiss the objections to the simple principle. However, in *Demands of Morality*, Liam Murphy takes these objections seriously for at least two distinct reasons.

Inference Question

1. Based on the first paragraph, which of the following statements must be true?

   A. If morality is extremely demanding, then one always ought to act so as to produce the best possible circumstances.
   B. If moral standards do not preclude the personal projects humans find most fulfilling, then they are not that extreme.
   C. Some people always act in ways that produce the best possible circumstances.
   D. Morality precludes the personal projects that humans find most fulfilling.

Strengthen/Weaken (Within) Question

2. Which of the following claims provides the most support in the passage for the "simple principle"?

   A. Ethical projects should be completely without constraints.
   B. Objections to the simple principle are difficult to imagine.
   C. Moral theories are not less valid if they require great sacrifices.
   D. Nobody always acts to produce the best possible circumstances.

KAPLAN TIP

The contrapositive to a conditional ("if...then") statement is guaranteed to be a true inference. For example, the contrapositive of "if A, then B" is "if not B, then not A."

Reasoning Within the Text Practice Passage (Questions 3–7)

If one always ought to act so as to produce the best possible circumstances, then morality is extremely demanding. No one could plausibly claim to have met the requirements of this "simple principle." It would seem strange to punish those intending to do good by sentencing them to an impossible task. Also, if the standards of right conduct are as extreme as they seem, then they will preclude the personal projects that humans find most fulfilling.

From an analytic perspective, the potential extreme demands of morality are not a "problem." A theory of morality is no less valid simply because it asks great sacrifices. In fact, it is difficult to imagine what kind of constraints could be put on our ethical projects. Shouldn't we reflect on our base prejudices, and not allow them to provide boundaries for our moral reasoning? Thus, it is tempting to simply dismiss the objections to the simple principle. However, in *Demands of Morality*, Liam Murphy takes these objections seriously for at least two distinct reasons.

First, discussion of the simple principle provides an excellent vehicle for a discussion of morality in general. Perhaps, in a way, this is Murphy's attempt at doing philosophy "from the inside out." Second, Murphy's starting point tells us about the nature of his project. Murphy must take seriously the collisions between moral philosophy and our intuitive sense of right and wrong. He must do so because his work is best interpreted as intended to forge moral principles from our firm beliefs, and not to proscribe beliefs given a set of moral principles.

Murphy argues from our considered judgments rather than to them. For example, Murphy cites our "simple but firmly held" beliefs as supporting the potency of the over-demandingness objection, and nowhere in the work can one find a source of moral values divorced from human preferences.

Murphy does not tell us what set of "firm beliefs" we ought to have. Rather, he speaks to an audience of well-intentioned but unorganized moral realists, and tries to give them principles that represent their considered moral judgments. Murphy starts with this base sense of right and wrong, but recognizes that it needs to be supplemented by reason where our intuitions are confused or conflicting. Perhaps Murphy is looking for the best interpretation of our convictions, the same way certain legal scholars try to find the best interpretation of our Constitution.

This approach has disadvantages. Primarily, Murphy's arguments, even if successful, do not provide the kind of motivating force for which moral philosophy has traditionally searched. His work assumes and argues in terms of an inner sense of morality, and his project seeks to deepen that sense. Of course, it is quite possible that the moral viewpoints of humans will not converge, and some humans have no moral sense at all. Thus, it is very easy for the moral skeptic to point out a lack of justification and ignore the entire work.

On the other hand, Murphy's choice of a starting point avoids many of the problems of moral philosophy. Justifying the content of moral principles and granting a motivating force to those principles is an extraordinary task. It would be unrealistic to expect all discussions of moral philosophy to derive such justifications. Projects that attempt such a derivation have value, but they are hard pressed to produce logical consequences for everyday life. In the end, Murphy's strategy may have more practical effect than its first-principle counterparts, which do not seem any more likely to convince those that would reject Murphy's premises.

Passage Outline

P1.

P2.

P3.

P4.

P5.

P6.

P7.

Goal:

Questions

3. Which of the following can be inferred about "doing philosophy from the inside out"?

A. Murphy was the first philosopher to employ such an approach.
B. It allows no place for rational argument in the formation of ethical principles.
C. It is fundamentally different from the practice of first-principle philosophy.
D. It is designed to dismiss objections to the "simple principle."

Question Type:

4. The passage implies that a moral principle derived from applying Murphy's philosophy to a particular group would be applicable to another group if:

A. the first group recommended the principle to the second group.
B. the moral viewpoints of the two groups do not converge.
C. the members of the second group have no firmly held beliefs.
D. the second group shares the same fundamental beliefs as the first group.

Question Type:

KAPLAN TIP

Inference questions ask about the unstated parts of arguments, assumptions (implicit evidence), and implications (implicit conclusions). When all else fails with such questions, try the Denial Test: negating an inference will significantly weaken claims made in the passage.

Reasoning Within the Text Practice Passage (Questions 3–7)

If one always ought to act so as to produce the best possible circumstances, then morality is extremely demanding. No one could plausibly claim to have met the requirements of this "simple principle." It would seem strange to punish those intending to do good by sentencing them to an impossible task. Also, if the standards of right conduct are as extreme as they seem, then they will preclude the personal projects that humans find most fulfilling.

From an analytic perspective, the potential extreme demands of morality are not a "problem." A theory of morality is no less valid simply because it asks great sacrifices. In fact, it is difficult to imagine what kind of constraints could be put on our ethical projects. Shouldn't we reflect on our base prejudices, and not allow them to provide boundaries for our moral reasoning? Thus, it is tempting to simply dismiss the objections to the simple principle. However, in *Demands of Morality*, Liam Murphy takes these objections seriously for at least two distinct reasons.

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This approach has disadvantages. Primarily, Murphy's arguments, even if successful, do not provide the kind of motivating force for which moral philosophy has traditionally searched. His work assumes and argues in terms of an inner sense of morality, and his project seeks to deepen that sense. Of course, it is quite possible that the moral viewpoints of humans will not converge, and some humans have no moral sense at all. Thus, it is very easy for the moral skeptic to point out a lack of justification and ignore the entire work.

On the other hand, Murphy's choice of a starting point avoids many of the problems of moral philosophy. Justifying the content of moral principles and granting a motivating force to those principles is an extraordinary task. It would be unrealistic to expect all discussions of moral philosophy to derive such justifications. Projects that attempt such a derivation have value, but they are hard pressed to produce logical consequences for everyday life. In the end, Murphy's strategy may have more practical effect than its first-principle counterparts, which do not seem any more likely to convince those that would reject Murphy's premises.

5. Murphy's position is most *weakened* in the
    passage by the claim that:

    A. he does not tell readers what "firm beliefs" to
        have.
    B. it is strange to punish those intending to do
        good.
    C. he is attempting philosophy "from the inside
        out."
    D. the moral viewpoints of humans may not
        converge.

Question Type:

6. The claim that not all moral philosophies have to
    provide readers with the motivation to be ethical
    is used by the author to:

    A. support the first-principle approach to ethics.
    B. bolster an assumption of the "simple principle."
    C. challenge an implication of Murphy's thesis.
    D. counter an objection to Murphy's position.

Question Type:

7. How does the author suggest that Murphy would
    be able to resolve the conflict between "the
    personal projects that humans find most fulfilling"
    and the demands of living ethically?

    A. By dismissing the objections to the "simple
        principle"
    B. By finding the best interpretation of the U.S.
        Constitution
    C. By starting from moral intuitions rather than
        principles
    D. By being more practical than his first-principle
        counterparts

Question Type:

KAPLAN TIP

Some Reasoning Within the Text questions do not really fall into the
Inference or Strengthen/Weaken types. These questions are relatively
rare, but can require a variety of reasoning-based tasks, such as resolving
apparent paradoxes, finding statements of clarification, or even appraising
the quality of arguments from the passage.

K

LESSON 6.3 REVIEW

CARS Skill 2: Reasoning Within the Text

Question Types

Inference
- Ask about unstated claims that must be true given what is stated
- Use the Denial Test to isolate the statement most crucial to the argument

Strengthen/Weaken (Within Passage)
- Test recognition of logical relationships from the passage
- Set expectations by finding claims with the desired effect in the passage

CARS 2:
Basic CARS Question Types

PASSAGE I (QUESTIONS 1–6)

The rise of the FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate) sector in the global economy, but especially in the "Western" democratic nations of North America and Europe, has forever altered the face of modern capitalism. While for decades Western democracies allowed for the empowerment of workers who crafted goods or provided services that led to a net increase in economic value, an orchestrated capture of the levers of power by the FIRE sector has led to the political dominance of the *rentier* class, the elite whose wealth increases solely through "rent-seeking," that is, exploitation of the monopolistic privileges associated with property rights. In short, the West has been transformed from a *productive* economy to an *extractive* one.

Evidence of this transformation can be found in the remarkable shift in behavior of companies that were once titans of manufacturing, that established their market share through efficient production of vital consumer goods, but which have now become "financialized," increasingly seeking more profit through the heavy deployment of financial instruments. For example, in 2006, both Ford and General Motors earned more income through the interest-based lending associated with purchasing their vehicles than through the actual manufacture and sale of the vehicles themselves.

Though not a distinction typically recognized by the ascendant neoclassical tradition—today's answer to medieval Scholasticism's apologetics—the difference between productive and extractive economies could not be starker. What is the true economic value of a home? The laborers who build the house and implement the architect's vision create far more real value than the landlord who purchases the property and rents it out to hapless tenants to try and turn a profit. Meanwhile, the landlord will have to deal with a host of other middlemen, all scrumming for their cut of the action, from calculating bankers seeking to capitalize on their control of the currency supply through usurious lending, to opportunistic realtors looking to "flip" properties for a quick buck. Each party takes as much as it can and gives back as little as it has to—and the consumer always picks up the tab.

Centuries of human economic enterprise have created an abundance of valuable commodities and, thus, from the standpoint of individuals who want more for themselves regardless of the cost to others, it makes more sense to exploit the wealth that already exists rather than take the risk of trying to create value anew. For the relatively small cost of campaign contributions and other forms of legalized bribery, a wealthy donor can purchase pliant politicians who will overturn unprofitable regulations and enact new laws to ensure that rent-seeking can proceed unimpeded. With democracy effectively subverted, the enforcement mechanisms of the state (ultimately grounded in violence, and the threat thereof, posed by police, military, and private security forces) ensure that monopolies are protected, so that the *rentier* class need not worry about the dangers that actual competition could pose to their profit margins.

Of course, considering the matter more broadly, humanity would do well to combat such corruption and, more generally, to avoid encouraging people to play zero-sum games. An extractive economy necessitates the immiseration of the masses who lack monopoly privileges, who must continually be servicing debts, paying fees, and selling themselves piecemeal simply to satisfy their basic needs. Hence, the *rentier* class would do well to reconsider its myopic focus on immediate profitability: history shows that the polarization of wealth rarely contributes to social stability and long-term prosperity.

1. The author of the passage most likely assumes that:

   A. There are no more productive economies in the world today.
   B. Economic value can be neither created nor destroyed.
   C. Landlords and bankers produce virtually nothing of real value.
   D. Extractive economies are no worse than productive economies.

2. What role does the claim that it is easier to exploit existing wealth than to try to create new value play in the passage's argument?

   A. It offers a potential justification for the behavior of members of the *rentier* class.
   B. It strengthens the author's central thesis.
   C. It weakens the author's central thesis.
   D. It offers a potential challenge to the stance taken by members of the *rentier* class.

3. The author of the passage probably views *rentiers*:

   A. as short-sighted business people only focused on a production-based economy.
   B. with contempt for their immoral exploitation of lower class production.
   C. as a powerful class who need to reassess their position to ensure future stability.
   D. with admiration for their financial success in the face of a slowing economy.

4. According to the author, which of the following would be considered to have the least real value?

   A. An investor giving money to a scientist to invent a new hair-loss drug
   B. A potter creating bowls, mugs, and plates to sell at a local farmer's market
   C. An investment banker buying bitcoins and trading them against other cryptocurrencies
   D. A musician recording music and marketing that music via the Internet

5. The author's example of Ford and General Motors is used to support his argument about:

   A. the shift from a productive society to an extractive one.
   B. the difference between a productive economy and an extractive one.
   C. the political action of the *rentier* class.
   D. the abundance of valuable commodities in today's economy.

6. According to the passage, which of the following first allowed the change from a productive economy to an extractive one?

   A. The apologetics of the proponents of Scholasticism
   B. Ford and General Motors changing to producing less and extracting more
   C. Centuries of abundance of valuable commodities
   D. The FIRE act in the United States

PASSAGE II (QUESTIONS 1–6)

Visual art—drawing, painting, sculpture, and the like—holds a clear place and process in the mind of the general public. To clarify, I mean that the average person knows how a painting, for instance, is created, but the workings of other disciplines that craft visual experiences are less clear to the average member of their audience. The popular perception of these hard-working artists becomes the default: a hand wave of, "Oh, I'm sure it comes together somehow." This sentiment becomes progressively stronger as the creation in question becomes more collaborative, and as the final visual product is less of the audience's primary engagement with the work as a whole.

Theatrical design lies at the extreme of both the above trends: in addition to theater's status as one of the definitive collaborative art forms, the strictly visual aspects of a performance—scenic, costume, and lighting design—are not generally "why [one] goes to the theater." Because of the latter point in particular, these design aspects exist as nothing more than a subordinate credit in a play's program to most theatergoers, even as modern technology and production values allow them to be an ever-larger part of the experience.

Needless to say, designers for the performing arts (which include dance and opera as well as theater) can bring a strong and definitive artistic voice to a work; and that voice is often nuanced and masterful. My own scenic design professor, who is now a Tony Award winner for his craft, was six-foot-four, with a build that would be placed by popular stereotype as more football player than dollhouse maker. But his giant hands would spend countless hours building miniature, astonishingly lifelike sets and stages out of cardstock and gesso.

The models demanded absolute perfection and detail because while the miniature is not the final product of the show itself, it *is* the final product of the designer. His role is to make a complete visualization of the stage and set dressings as the audience will experience it, but also to convey that vision in such a way that it can be duplicated by others who are tasked to build the full-size version out of plywood, metal, screen projections, or whatever is best dictated by the budget and practicalities of the production.

That flexibility given to the actual scene-builders is the heart of what makes breathtaking visual theater, and it also exposes a key tenet of collaborative art in general. The operant word is *specialization*: the scene is designed by a man or woman with an eye for weight, color, composition, and dramatic function; but it is then constructed by a team that knows how to build, fly, and weld. As an example, consider a designer who demands a bucking and swaying boat for the opening scene of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The designer will build a model with each plank on the boat just so, and that rocks back and forth to the exact angle desired of the final product. The exact mechanism of that rocking, on the other hand, whether it be hydraulic platforms, sophisticated video projections, or ultra-strong cables from the fly space above, is left to the engineers, carpenters, and technicians in the "scene shop." Compromises on the initial design may, of course, have to be made, but they are normally handled in consultation with the director and the designers, and especially in today's big-budget Broadway productions, such scope adjustments are cut to an absolute minimum.

1. Which of the following is best supported by the passage?

   A. Theater is not a visual art.
   B. Scene-builders run into technical difficulties during production.
   C. *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's best work.
   D. Some set designs are impossible to build.

2. Implicit in the author's discussion about the theater is the assumption that:

   A. the set design is an integral part of the theatergoer's experience.
   B. the most important aspect of the theater is the set design.
   C. collaborative art is the best visual art.
   D. all set designers do not look the part.

3. Which of the following is best supported by evidence in the passage?

   A. Engineers, carpenters, and technicians are the most important staff on a theater production.
   B. Everything seen on the set of a theater production was made by a set designer.
   C. Set designers are the most important staff on theater productions.
   D. Everything seen on the set of a major theater production was made by the scene shop.

4. Compared to earlier theater productions, a modern theater production should be:

   A. built by set designers and designed by engineers and technicians.
   B. closer to the vision of the set designer.
   C. further away from the vision of the set designer.
   D. cheaper and more cost-effective.

5. Which of the following would the author most likely agree regarding those who work on theater set design?

   A. They are usually too caught up in how something works to truly understand the art behind the design.
   B. No one appreciates their work and it goes unnoticed in the art world at large.
   C. They are underappreciated by some audiences and deserve more recognition for their contributions.
   D. Only some people appreciate their work and there are currently no avenues for them to be recognized.

6. Which of the following is implied about dance and opera?

   A. Their sets come together organically.
   B. Their set designers work less than their theater counterparts.
   C. They are both forms of collaborative art.
   D. Their sets are the main reason that people attend.

PASSAGE III (QUESTIONS 1–6)

Innovative and influential, science fiction is a large and rich literary genre that has transcended literature and become part of culture. With visions of fantastical worlds and future technologies, science fiction has won the hearts of millions of people around the world. With its future-leaning viewpoints, science fiction is able to provide commentary on many different issues such as technology, politics, the military, gender politics, and dealing with the unknown. Stemming from literature, science fiction has pervaded media and produced some of the most recognizable franchises, and phrases, in today's world.

Science fiction as a literary genre has recently been cast under the broad umbrella term of speculative fiction. Speculative fiction is a much broader category that includes science fiction, fantasy, horror fiction, supernatural fiction, and superhero fiction as well as historical fiction and alternate history. All of these genres rely on imagining what would happen in alternate realities where situations are different. The defining characteristics between the genres are in what respect the reality the story takes place in differs from the current reality. Science fiction relies on extrapolating current technology to determine the future course of human development. This includes social and political development as well as technologic and scientific advances.

Traditionally, even within the genre itself there are divisions. The two major divisions, hard and soft, mainly are derived from the scientific rigor behind the innovations discussed in the work. Hard science fiction advocates using only very precise and accurate extrapolation of scientific principles. Hard science fiction writers make sure to research their background material extensively to maintain an internal logic and make sure to explain any apparent phenomena in terms of biology, physics, and chemistry. This precludes the inclusion of any fantastical creatures, especially those based in fantasy realms such as dragons, vampires, wyverns, etc.

Soft science fiction, on the other hand, has a much more general definition and a looser interpretation that allows all kinds of works to be included in the genre. Soft science fiction also coincides with the "soft" sciences such as sociology, psychology, and political science. It deals with the more human side of the future, dealing with how the future, including future technology, will affect interpersonal relationships and the culture of the human race. This becomes an interesting thought experiment as these futures are usually utopian, dystopian, or, even better, a utopian façade covering a dystopia such as Huxley's *Brave New World*. Soft science fiction is also allowed more leeway in the rigor of the underlying science. Fantastical mechanisms and technology are more widespread and accepted as the rigors of hard science fiction are given to the inclusion of things like faster-than-light travel to enable the story to proceed, albeit sometimes illogically.

In reality, hard and soft science fiction operate more on a continuum. Taxonomy of something as fluid as literature is merely a mental exercise for those who want the world to be black and white. With the advent of new technology, even the lines between science fiction and fantasy are becoming blurred. Arthur C. Clarke, a famed science fiction writer, said, "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" and it has recently become popular to have a scientific basis for magic in fantasy novels. This quote rings true as more technologies get so advanced that the average person might as well consider them magic for all they know of their internal workings.

1. Which of the following viewpoints could reasonably be attributed to the author?

   A. Hard science fiction is the purest and objectively best form of science fiction.
   B. Soft science fiction is inferior because of its lack of scientific rigor.
   C. Science fiction is an influential genre that is not easily categorized.
   D. There are no clear characteristics of different kinds of science fiction.

2. How does the author regard works that comment on dystopian futures with exaggerated political climates of today?

   A. With disdain for their treatment of the hard sciences
   B. As valuable commentary that can be important and guide society's views
   C. With admiration that they can predict the future evolution of technology
   D. As a perversion of the science that will make the future possible

3. The information in the passage best supports the author's conclusions that:

   A. most science fiction works are neither completely hard nor soft science fiction.
   B. almost all science fiction writers start out writing hard science fiction before moving to soft.
   C. the scientific rigor needed to write hard science fiction is impossible without a PhD.
   D. science fiction works based on current technology focus too much on politics.

4. What does the author assume about faster than light travel?

   A. It is a characteristic of hard science fiction.
   B. It is not scientifically feasible logically following our current technology.
   C. It is used only in books that are purely soft science fiction.
   D. It is a main plot point in most science fiction today.

5. As used in the passage, the term "scientific rigor" (paragraph 3) most closely means:

   A. how much time it takes for one to get a degree in the natural sciences.
   B. the increasing difficulty as one progresses to higher sciences.
   C. the extent to which the science affects the story's plot.
   D. how accurate and logically the science follows today's knowledge.

6. The author includes a discussion of speculative fiction primarily in order to:

   A. describe the hierarchical quality of different forms of fiction.
   B. give context to where science fiction exists currently in literary taxonomy.
   C. show critics have always been critical of science fiction writers.
   D. offer a conclusion about the origins of science fiction.

PASSAGE IV (QUESTIONS 1–7)

If one always ought to act so as to produce the best possible circumstances, then morality is extremely demanding. No one could plausibly claim to have met the requirements of this "simple principle." It would seem strange to punish those intending to do good by sentencing them to an impossible task. Also, if the standards of right conduct are as extreme as they seem, then they will preclude the personal projects that humans find most fulfilling.

From an analytic perspective, the potential extreme demands of morality are not a "problem." A theory of morality is no less valid simply because it asks great sacrifices. In fact, it is difficult to imagine what kind of constraints could be put on our ethical projects. Shouldn't we reflect on our base prejudices, and not allow them to provide boundaries for our moral reasoning? Thus, it is tempting to simply dismiss the objections to the simple principle. However, in *Demands of Morality*, Liam Murphy takes these objections seriously for at least two distinct reasons.

First, discussion of the simple principle provides an excellent vehicle for a discussion of morality in general. Perhaps, in a way, this is Murphy's attempt at doing philosophy "from the inside out." Second, Murphy's starting point tells us about the nature of his project. Murphy must take seriously the collisions between moral philosophy and our intuitive sense of right and wrong. He [must do so] because his work is best interpreted as intended to forge moral principles from our firm beliefs, and not to proscribe beliefs given a set of moral principles.

Murphy argues from our considered judgments rather than to them. For example, Murphy cites our "simple but firmly held" beliefs as supporting the potency of the over-demandingness objection, and nowhere in the work can one find a source of moral values divorced from human preferences.

Murphy does not tell us what set of "firm beliefs" we ought to have. Rather, he speaks to an audience of well-intentioned but unorganized moral realists, and tries to give them principles that represent their considered moral judgments. Murphy starts with this base sense of right and wrong, but recognizes that it needs to be supplemented by reason where our intuitions are confused or conflicting. Perhaps Murphy is looking for the best interpretation of our convictions, the same way certain legal scholars try to find the best interpretation of our Constitution.

This approach has disadvantages. Primarily, Murphy's arguments, even if successful, do not provide the kind of motivating force for which moral philosophy has traditionally searched. His work assumes and argues in terms of an inner sense of morality, and his project seeks to deepen that sense. Of course, it is quite possible that the moral viewpoints of humans will not converge, and some humans have no moral sense at all. Thus, it is very easy for the moral skeptic to point out a lack of justification and ignore the entire work.

On the other hand, Murphy's choice of a starting point avoids many of the problems of moral philosophy. Justifying the content of moral principles and granting a motivating force to those principles is an extra ordinary task. It would be unrealistic to expect all discussions of moral philosophy to derive such justifications. Projects that attempt such a derivation have value, but they are hard pressed to produce logical consequences for everyday life. In the end, Murphy's strategy may have more practical effect than its first-principle counterparts, which do not seem any more likely to convince those that would reject Murphy's premises.

1. According to Murphy, the application of reason is necessary for forming moral principles when:

   A. the beliefs of one group supersede the beliefs of another.
   B. people's firmly held beliefs are conflicting or confused.
   C. the belief system of a group conflicts with an overriding ethical principle.
   D. individuals have no moral sense at all.

2. In the context of the passage, the Constitution serves as the basis of:

   A. a logical proof.
   B. the author's main point.
   C. an analogy.
   D. a rebuttal.

3. According to the passage, evidence of the existence of individuals who entirely lack a moral sense would:

   A. confirm the notion that moral principles should be derived from the considered judgments of individuals.
   B. substantiate a potential disadvantage of Murphy's philosophical approach.
   C. support Murphy's belief that reason is necessary when intuitions are conflicting or confused.
   D. prove that first-principle strategies of ethical theorizing are no more.

4. Which of the following would be the most appropriate title for the passage?

   A. "The 'Simple Principle': Deceptively Complex"
   B. "The Philosophy of Right and Wrong"
   C. "Addressing Objections to *Demands of Morality*"
   D. "Murphy's Law: Everything Can Go Wrong"

5. The phrase "human preferences" (paragraph 4) refers to which of the following concepts?

   A. Instinctive beliefs people hold
   B. The popularity of Murphy's philosophy
   C. The appeal of absolute moral principles
   D. Human desire for codes of morality

6. The "analytic perspective" the author mentions (paragraph 2) is most clearly presented as:

   A. the viewpoint held by the author.
   B. the viewpoint of *Demands of Morality*.
   C. the viewpoint that Murphy opposes.
   D. the viewpoint taken by Murphy's critics.

7. Which of the following does the author NOT state regarding the "simple principle"?

   A. Its drawbacks are not necessarily problematic.
   B. It is a result of philosophy "from the inside out."
   C. No individual has ever satisfied its requirements.
   D. Studying it requires confronting our base prejudices.