MCAT CARS 1 Homework

Passage I (Questions 1-7)

This is an abstract, humanities passage that is difficult "get" even after reading it. It is important to remember that for the most difficult passages, if you can manage to just get those one or two big ideas that the author is focusing on, you can still get a fair amount of points.

The fact is that we have to be able to immediately know when an author has shifted scopes within a passage, especially a large shift. There was a ''massive'' shift in the ¶6 which the active reader will notice, which helps you understand why the author gave you the first five ¶s: language! This is the challenge of this passage: the real purpose isn't given until the very end, after a long and seemingly odd story about the Devil, an Angel, and laughter. We want to read in such a way, we are almost able to predict ''something'' big has to be done in ¶6 or else this entire passage is rubbish and not very MCAT-like. By the end, we are not disappointed.

¶1: Ang ≠ good & Dev ≠ bad ---> more complicated

¶2: Ang ≈ meaning, Dev ≈ loss of mean; need both in = amounts

¶3: loss of mean = laugh, initially ∴laugh = Dev

¶4: Ang laugh = restore mean, opp of Dev's

¶5:Ang & Dev laugh @ one another

¶6: 2 laughs opp but called same word

Goal: via A/D story, argue 'laughter'

Question 1

There's no debate, this is a function question as the word appears in the stem, and we have a specific reference so that's the first place to go back to. Reworded: why did the author include ¶3? The outline definitely helps here, and even gives us the answer, if we labeled it well. But even if we go back it's easy to see that the majority of the entire ¶ is dedicated to discussing the Devil's laughter: it's genesis and qualities. The devil being cast to earth is mentioned, but only insomuch to give context back to laughter.

(A): no need to even blink, this fits perfectly

(B): this question can be tempting if you bring in outside bias or information. Conventional and common knowledge that can be related to the topic of a CARS passage is commonly featured in the wrong answers. Why? Because if you are not trained to ensure you do not bring in outside information, you can do so without even realizing it, subconsciously. The "justice" of the Devil's punishment is not a concern, or mentioned, in any way, anywhere in the passage. Blatantly OS.

(C): this is the prime distractor but can be eliminated to the critical thinker for two reasons. First, this is a DIST as it's gotten the object being named as ambiguous wrong! The author's argument is that the word 'laughter' is ambiguous, not the meaning(s) of the word, so this is DIST. Hypothetically, if you didn't notice that you could still have eliminated it because it would have qualified as a FUD, as that is dealt with in ¶5, NOT the third which is what's being asked about.

(D): this is a typical FUD. it's from the passage and even from the right ¶, but is not the reason why the author wrote the ¶3. It is just an ancillary point, to provide more context for the author's idea.

Question 2

Seeing the phrase "...main idea" in the question stem signals a main idea question which means our outline goal will help.

(A): this is a true statement from the passage but misses the point. The author did not write the passage for the purpose of informing us of the laughing order of the Devil and an Angel. FUD.

(B): the purpose of laughter, in and of itself, and the misunderstanding of it was not the primary purpose. In fact, the purpose of laughter was never a concern at all! Only two kinds of it, and it's relationship to language. This is OS.

(C): this is the main idea and confirms the authors large amount of emphasis from ¶5 which tied together the rest of the passage

(D): human laughter, strictly speaking, was never truly discussed in the passage. That alone is enough for us to disqualify this as OS. Although there was discussion of "equilibrium of power" between demons and angels in ¶3, there was no mention of a type of power or laughter that was unique and in between the two. Again, OS.

Question 3

The phrasing of this question should stand out, as it's almost a "main idea" but for only a certain part of the passage. Be flexible! The outline will help us get this one quickly. The author opens the passage by providing his own view of the Devil (not evil, but anti-rational) and Angels (not good, but divine creation) and then goes onto say that for "the good of the world" we need balance between both and not just one or the other. Simple: he's just sort of defining those figures, what they are and are not.

The operative word is ""'predominantly'' concerned with". This helps to pick the correct answer and avoid the primary distractor.

Even though we DO NOT and WILL NEVER need outside of the passage information, it's interesting to note that the author's view of these figures is, at a minimum, different than "common convention". So, it's almost as if he starts off by dispelling what your opinion may be on the figures he's going to discuss, and asserts his own view. This ends up being very close to the answer.

(A): this should be easy to eliminate. In ¶2 the author states "...the good of the world does not require [angels] to gain precedence over [demons] (as I thought when I was young)." This is just an aside style comment, with no real significance, other than to provide a bit of extra context with no substance. Certainly, not the reason for the first 2 ¶s.

(B): the author states "...the good of the world does not require [angels] to gain precedence over [demons] (as I thought when I was young)." in ¶2, so this is OPP.

(C): this is the prime distractor. Equilibrium is talked about but "finding" it really wasn't, so it's somewhat of a DIST. Also, laughter isn't even introduced until ¶3, so how could it be the primary concern of the previous 2 ¶s?

(D): this is very much what the author was predominantly concerned with as evidenced in the passage itself and our outline.

Question 4

The word "implies" in the question stem informs us this is an inference question. Keep it simple, and logical: what is the relationship between laughter and language? Well, there was a pretty huge clue in ¶5 to the careful reader: semantic[s], which is the study of meaning via language.

So, from here we can easily see the relationship, "[the angels] have tricked us all with their [meaning of words] hoax." "...their...laughter and...the Devil's have the same [word]." "There are two kinds of laughter, and we lack the words to distinguish them."

So, one word (laughter) has two different meanings (one dealing with loss of meaning, and one dealing with restoration of meaning). Sounds like the word 'laughter' is, by definition, ambiguous.

(A): yes, language (the word "laughter") is capable of concealing distinct meanings (no order, order) and this is correct

(B): this directly contradicts the passage, "...deprived...of their...meaning, the place assigned to them...make us laugh. Initially, therefore, laughter is the province of the

Devil." If language cannot be deprived of meaning, then how could the word 'laughter' be ambiguous?

(C): this also contradicts the passage and is an OPP. If language is always precise, how would the word 'laughter' be ambiguous?

(D): the word "spiritual" allows us to immediately eliminate this choice as there is no mention in any way, explicit or otherwise, of any supernatural, spiritual, religious, etc . context. This is OS.

Question 5

Because of the phrasing of this inference question, we don't want to waste too much time before jumping into the answers so we can let them help us. We're asked to pick an answer that is the ''most'' similar to the Devil's laughter, so we need to remember what that is: loss of meaning. The answer, regardless of the specifics, must necessarily have something to do with loss of meaning.

(A): his sounds eerily similar to the Angel's laughter, because it is, so it's an OPP considering we were asked for something similar to the Devil's.

(B): "laughing…[where] the meaning of a word is twisted" is incredibly similar to the nature of the Devil's laughter. This is correct.

(C): this choice can easily be eliminated as there is nothing in the passage, including the Devil's laughter, that we can relate to it. A satisfying laugh is not similar to the devil's, regardless whether or not a complicated task has been completed or not (which is also completely unrelated). Very OS.

(D): this sounds sort of devilish, doesn't it? This answer is picked frequently for a very important reason, which if you understand, can allow you to avoid doing it in the future and improve. This answer choice is tempting if you bring in outside information. You may not even consciously realize you did! If you think of the Devil as "evil", this answer is attractive because it sounds like something an evil Devil could reasonably do. . Remember: it's all about what the author thinks, not us! The author specifically made a point that the Devil is not evil, he's anti-rational. This is OS.

Question 6

Boil the question down to it's simplest: pick the answer that the author would NOT agree with. Therefore the correct answer must be contrary to something the author said, and the wrong answers will be something the author said (one way or another) and OPP.

(A): this was a large point made by the author in ¶2, so not something he would disagree with

(B): this is also something that the author discusses in ¶2. If equilibrium between rationality (Angel) and irrationality (Devil) is needed for the good of the world, then the Devil is necessary for that good. Thus, the Devil serves an important function, and would agree with this.

(C): just as one word can help us to eliminate a distractor, one word can help us confirm the correct answer. The word "simultaneous" is operant. The author has argued that there are two types of laughter, and that the word 'laughter' is ambiguous and has (at least) two different and completely opposite meanings. But the author never said they

can be expressed simultaneously which means the author would NOT agree with this and this is correct.

(D): this is the primary distractor if we think in terms of only the devil's laughter. If this is in reference to the Angel's laughter then the author would agree as the Angel had never seen something deprived of meaning and still laughed (after he saw the Devil laugh). This is a OPP.

Question 7

"According to the passage" signifies a detail question typically but because we have to pick an answer that's not explicitly stated, this is an inference. So use your outline to help find passage info that gives the relationships between laughter and meaning.

The order of events in ¶3 is clear: loss of meaning is caused (by some unknown which doesn't matter), then laughter occurs. That seems pretty straightforward: loss of meaning ---> laughter.

(A): this is a valid inference which is much easier to see if we know the definition of "immutable". It means 'unable to be changed'. So, reworded: "laughter would not have happened if the meaning of everything couldn't be changed". That must be true, according to the passage. If the meaning of things could not be changed, how could the Devil have ever laughed? He wouldn't have been able to.

(B): this is a classic OS. This answer is implying some relationship between laughter and the debate about meaning of things which was never discussed.

(C): this is an OPP/DIST. The author says that there are 2 types of laughter and that each one is the opposite of the other, but we use the same word "laughter" for both. So, it has at least 2 meanings, not no meanings!

(D): this is a DIST as it's claiming something that the author didn't exactly say. The word to notice here is "only". If an extreme is being used, you'd better be sure that the author was extreme about his subject matter. The author says there are two types of laughter, each which has it's own meaning. He never rules out the possibility there might be more, each with its own meaning. Nor does he say these are the only two forms. Maybe there is more? Who cares! If the author doesn't talk about it, we don't have to think about it.

Passage II (Questions 1-6)

This is a humanities passage, dealing with literature. Like all MCAT CARS passages, reading actively and trying to grasp what the author's large points are (and opinions!) is paramount to all of the details.

Like most MCAT CARS passage, keywords can inform the active reader of a plethora of clues. In ¶1, the word "But" blatantly tells us that the author's focus for the rest of the passage is changing and that there is something inherently different between "gradations within society" and "fate of society itself". In ¶2, the word "I" (first person) is so incredibly easy to read over that we may not even recognize it. But it's incredibly powerful as we know that this is very opinion based.

¶1: soc nov (stable) v pol nov (fate of society)

¶2: pol nov = mix of opp = behavior/feeling v ideology; auth likes!

¶3:auth saves room for other side

¶4:mix of opp includes auth op --->apol element

Goal: describe characteristics of pol nov

Question 1

This question presents a classic CARS tactic: defining the thing being asked about in the question stem instead of using the term outright. Believe it or not, that simple tactic can cause us to miss this question or spend more time on it than we should. Simple: literary works that focus on ideological issues = political novel.

Notice that the first word of each choice, an action word, can help you to eliminate (B) and (D) right off the bat!

(A): this answer choice intuitively seems wrong, but you may not be able to explain why. It is difficult to articulate why it's wrong, which is an important skill to cultivate. In this context, "dramatic appeal" is taken to be human behavior/feeling, and "serious themes" is taken to be ideology. The reason why this is a DIST is because it's saying the author stated that ideology is more important, and minimizes, the human behavior/feeling element. The author never said one is more important, only that political novels have both.

(B): the word "puzzled" is enough for us to strike this. The author was never, at any point, puzzled about anything and there is no evidence to say otherwise. Additionally, there was never any discussion of the acceptance of political novels by the general public. Completely OS.

(C): yes, this fits with the author's overall opinion: he liked them! But we also have evidence to support this: in ¶2 he states "...it is precisely from this conflict that that the political novel gaines its interest…" It may not stand out to those with a science background, but that is about as explicit as CARS passages get. The author thinks it's great!

(D): just like with (B), the word "disappointed" eliminates this one altogether without the need to read the rest of the answer. That word is completely incongruent (or absent) with everything the author said about political novels. Also, the confusion between the elements of the political novel was never a scope of discussion. OS on both counts.

Question 2

The clue "in order to" tips us off that this is a function question with an understood "why". Why did the author talk about Jane Austen? For what purpose or to accomplish what? A quick glance at our outline points us to ¶1 as that is the only place that the social novel was really discussed.

A quick glance back informs us that the author mentioned her as an example, almost in passing, when discussing the social novel before going onto the real focus, political novels.

(A): this tends to be the primary distractor as it just "sounds right". This typically stems from not reading the choice carefully enough and recognizing that a novel which "combines elements of ideology and human experience are political novelists, not social novelists. Austen was mentioned as an example of the later. OPP.

(B): this answer has a challenge which requires mild interpretation, just like the tougher points on Test Day will. You have to ask what is "earlier fiction traditions". Well, given the fact there is phrasing which hints that the political novel was "born" after the social novel, we can take those traditions to be the social novel. In that context, this answer makes perfect sense.

(C): the word "criticize" is enough for us to eliminate this as the author was never negative or critical of Austen so it just can't be right. The rest of the answer was also never accomplished, so OS.

(D): this one should be easy to snipe out, as no part of this answer was argued in the passage. OS.

Question 3

Notice the "According to the passage" which means we're going to use our outline and lean on the passage to guide us. We need to find where the emergence of the political novel was discussed, and find what was an important factor in that emergence.

A quick glance at our outline, and we're going back to ¶1! We see, "... the novelist's attention...shift[ed] from the gradations within society to the fate of society itself. It is at this point that the political novel comes to be written…"

So, just before the political novel comes to be written, there is a mention of a change in focus from gradations within society, to the fate of society itself. That must be it.

(A): no way! Austen is just mentioned as an example of a social novelist, not the person on whom the birth of the political novel hinged. OPP.

(B): this is a class FUD. A detail mentioned in the passage so it may be tempting but it does not answer the question, and is from the wrong part of the passage!

(C): bingo! This matches, very closely, to what we see in the passage and is correct.

(D): this wrong answer choice is full of OS. There is no mention of a group of critics coming together for some type of critic convention and agreeing, on anything. The idea that a great novel must contain conflict is also false; the author only states that political novels have conflict in them.

Question 4

This is a definition-in-context question which gives a huge clue. There is a necessary connection between "monolith of program" and something else in the passage! We just need to know what the right thing is, so go back and re-read for context.

""'The conflict is inescapable: the novel tries to confront experience in its immediacy and closeness, while ideology is by its nature general and inclusive. Yet it is precisely from this conflict that the political novel gains its interest and takes on the aura of high drama: the timelessness of abstraction is confronted with the flux of life, the monolith of program with the diversity of motive, the purity of ideal with the contamination of action."'"

We see that the two factors which are coming into conflict in political novels are given in the same order, respectively, for this entire quote: human behavior/feeling and then ideology. You could also, and even easier, notice that the last contrast is rather obvious in giving the order: purity of IDEAL with the contamination of action." Pretty clear that

the first thing represents ideology and the second is human behavior/feeling. So, the 'monolith of program' must be ideology.

(A): this is not what the 'monolith' is referring to, and is unrelated.

(B): this is also not one of the two components which are contrasting in political novels.

(C): this is a tricky FUD because it's a true statement and is stated by the author. But it's not what the 'monolith of program' is referring to. The "conflict" in this answer choice is the combination of both elements, not just the ideological one.

(D): this is precisely what was meant, and confirmed.

Question 5

This question stem is worded in such a way that we can think of it as a "main idea" question but for one particular paragraph, so immediately go back to it (and/or use your outline as guidance).

""'This is not to say that the political novelist's desires...fail to play a pivotal role in the novel's dialectic. Indeed, the political novel turns characteristically to an apolitical temptation:'""

After this colon, we see a long list of examples which serve as evidence to support the claim just given. It then wraps up saying that this

(A): this is a FUD, as that was done in ¶1.

(B): this is a DIST as examples were indeed given in that paragraph but not the reason for the paragraph. They were only there to support the author's central point, which is the correct answer. This was just a means to expound on that central point.

(C): this is another DIST that goes too far, which is typical of DIST wrong answers. Simply put: to say that "...political novel turns characteristically to an apolitical temptation" is not the same as saying "all political novels are in reality apolitical".

(D): this approximates the author's primary concern, as that is what is discussed in some detail (along w/ a long list of examples!).

Question 6

Quickly re-wording questions like this is an essential skill to understanding exactly what you're tasked with (which is always priority #1!). "Adopting the author's views as presented in the passage" means that we take everything stated as fact, and at face value. We're asked to "endorse" a position, by requirement, by adopting the passage.

In other words: which answer is consistent with the author's argument or opinion? If you stepped into the shoes of the author and believe everything he does, which answer would you agree with?

(A): this is correct, and supported in ¶2 ("To be a novel at all, it must contain...human behavior and feeling; yet it must also [have]...modern ideology. The conflict is inescapable…) and ¶3 ("Because it exposes the impersonal claims of ideology to the pressures of private emotion, the political novel must always be in a state of internal warfare…"). That is more than enough.

(B): this is a DIST that hinges on a few extreme words: "necessary" and "any". The author does say something, similar to this, but it's distorted. He said that consciousness of societal change did help to develop the political novel. But that is very different from saying that that is required in order to develop any new form of literature.

(C): a direct OPP. The characteristic being described is that of a political novel, but the "social novel" is being named. Wrong novel!

(D): the word that helped us to quickly eliminate this one is "prejudices". Not only was that not a central concern, but the process of overcoming them wasn't even mentioned or hinted at. An easy to snipe FUD!

Passage III (Questions 1-5)

This is social science passage presents more than one opinion, which has the potential to present hurdles if we do not recognize that and outline accordingly.

¶1: cong gave AC to comm to change, cong op: draft rad, illegal

¶2: mad op: good govt most imp goal, changes will do that, so not illegal

¶3: auth op: Mad's op about legality good, not 3/4 rat tho

¶4: weak to strong fed govt; states did not waive veto

¶5:auth op: rat constitution was morally legit

¶6: precedent for rad changes: done it already, will not tolerate bad govt

Goal: discuss Congress and Madison's opinions on AC changes, argue that draft had moral legitimacy"

Question 1

As always, find the clue within the stem. "According to the passage" informs us that this is a detail question and we're looking for a reason for the radical nature of the new constitution. Our outline is gold here, and points us to ¶6!

(A): this hits exactly what it seen in ¶6, "The ethical case for rebelling... is...strengthened by the fact that the government itself admitted its unfitness for the [needs] of the Union."

(B): the right of any given state to refuse to ratify the new constitution is never discussed in that exact way, so this is wrong on that count (OS/OPP). It was never talked about as a right, only that the states did not intend to waive their veto right, and that the author believes Madison wasn't necessarily legally justified for only requiring ¾ ratification.

(C): the passage never states that the government has a moral right to entrench itself against change; the author actually states that he believes the government does not have the right to do that. So it's an OPP.

(D): this is a FUD that can be tricky to discern why. The reason is ¶1 also states "Sensing that government defined by the Articles of Confederation did not meet the needs of the newly born United States e exigencies of the Union…" which is somewhat similar to what's being asked for, and this answer happens to be just after that. However, it's not exactly what's being asked for. We're asked for a reason for the revolutionary nature of it, not the primary reason it was changed to begin with.

Question 2

Even though the word 'assumption' is in this stem, this is an inference question as "most reasonably" typically indicates. You want to go to the answers quickly on this type of question, as you can't really know what direction the answers will take, but can only know where Madison's opinion is deal with from the outline and remind yourself of what it is quickly: the newly submitted constitution that was deemed "radical" and illegal by Congress, wasn't illegal because it would accomplish the goal of a good government which was the ultimate #1 priority.

(A): this answer is a characteristically seen OS, but it is a tempting choice. It's written in such a way that it could be right (or at a minimum, it's not wrong), until the very end. One word, "peace", makes it wrong immediately as it is never discussed and makes it completely wrong.

(B): even though it's worded in a different way, this is precisely what's done in the passage. Think about it: ""'Given...the principle that conflicts ought to be resolved in favor of more important goals, Madison argued [the changes] couldn't make the Constitution illegal.'""

(C): this is the OPP of what is stated in the passage, ""'...unanimous approval appears last in Madison's list of the goals of the convention'"". If it was last in the goals, then how could it be the most important objective?

(D): this is also an easy OPP to eliminate. If it corresponded to expectations exactly, then there would have been no surprises over the nature of the amended constitution and it wouldn't have been called radical/illegal.

Question 3

Simple: legal authority vs moral authority. What's the implication, according to the author? ¶5 tells us that it's most likely found (at least, in part) there! A quick glance back at our outline also points out that we should probably look at ¶3 too.

One thing that we definitely want to notice is that (B) and (D) are mutually exclusive, which means that either both are completely wrong and unrelated to the question itself, or one is the correct answer and the other is wrong. There's not really much in-between.

(A): this attractive distractor seems to use some of the "buzz words" from the passage but makes a claim that is never made. A "primary determinant" is never given, named, or discussed. We're only given that the legal and moral authority are discussed as some determinants, not that they are the only two, or that one is more important than the other. This is OS.

(B): the author never discusses anything which is dealing with a lack of moral authority so this is OPP. He only discusses the revised version submitted which he specifically states, might have moral authority.

(C): "never" should worry us here, as we need extreme and decisive language in order to pick this one (which we do not have). But more importantly, the morality of actions is not really part of the discussion so we can nix it on that count too. This is OS.

(D): this is what the author is implying and is rather explicitly given. He says that certain parties claimed the new revision was illegal (read: it does not have complete legal hegemony) but that doesn't make it morally illegitimate. Sounds almost exactly like the answer!

Question 4

This is a fairly challenging question, not only because it's an inference but also because it's lengthy. Both the question stem and the answers. Plus, there's a NOT in the stem!

With questions of this nature, it is critical that you do not just plow ahead, not fully understanding ''what'' you are attempting to accomplish. In most every circumstance, it is better and actually ends up being more time efficient to re-word a tough question, know exactly what's being asked, and then move forward. So, go back to ¶1 and be logical here:

1. Congress thought the AC didn't meet the needs of the country 2. Congress gave the AC to commissioners to change it so that it would meet the needs of country 3. The new AC was deemed radical and Congress was very surprised by it

Why were they surprised? What did they not foresee which caused their surprise?

The only rational answer is something was wrong in between #1 and #2 (above)!

(A): even though this is a tempting FUD, it doesn't answer the question or deal with a problem between #1 and #2. This distractor focuses more on the methods of ratification and not the "radical nature" of the constitution.

(B): this is also a FUD as it deal with an opinion that is NOT the focus of the question (i.e. the author's). The moral legitimacy of the new constitution was the focus of the author, not Congress.

(C): this almost seems too obvious, but it must be right! It fully explains the problem in going from #1 to #2 and is the inference.

(D): this cannot be right for obvious reasons: they submitted it to be changed! They knew there would be differences, so this is an OPP. They were just surprised by how much they had been changed.

Question 5

This is a tough strengthen/weaken beyond the text question, so be systematic in your approach and your review!

This question has a classic question-within-a-question. We're asked about "the argument put forth in the defense of the legality of the constitution submitted by the commissioners?" We need to know who's argument that is first! It is Madison's of course.

So, reworded: "Which answer, if true, would most seriously WEAKEN Madison's argument?" Now it's much simpler: go review what Madison's opinion was (as needed) and cycle through the answers! Only one will seriously weaken the argument.

(A): be flexible and interpret a term that used in the question, "non-unanimous". Let's use, say, 75%. So if ¾ ratification is incompatible with the goal of creating a good government, which Madison says is the most important and overriding goal, what does that mean? Ah ha! This would completely undermine Madison and weaken his argument. This is our correct answer!

(B): if this was true, it does not affect Madison's argument in any way. We can't relate "extensive debate among statesmen" to Madison's opinion in any reasonable way, within the context of the passage.

(C): if this was indeed true we could reason that, if anything, it might strengthen Madison's opinion so this is an OPP.

(D): if this was true, it wouldn't do anything to Madison's opinion because this answer is dealing with the author's opinion and would not strengthen or weaken Madison's.

Passage IV (Questions 1-6)

This social science passage is average, in terms of difficulty and content matter, and rattled with keywords which help us to be very aware of the author's focus.

¶1: ÷P=↓in fiscal policy legislation, ex

¶2: frag w/in branches = key prob, auth suggestion

¶3: frag w/in congress & y

¶4: 2 solns: auto-pilot & accountability

Goal: explain problem of ÷P, how it affects fiscal policy, & present 2 fixes

Question 1

This is a straightforward main idea question. Use your outline/goal!

(A): this is a DIST/FUD as the auto-pilot approach is only discussed in ¶4, and the author never takes side with one or the other, even though he presents how each one could be implemented or help.

(B): this is very close to our goal, and encapsulates what the author has done. Not too much, not too little. This is correct.

(C): this is the primary distractor as it's so close to being correct, but has left out a very significant portion of what the author did: present solutions. This is a typical FUD in main idea questions.

(D): this is a DIST, as it takes what the author has done and stretches it to the point where it's extreme. There is no language to conclude that the author has stated that it's "impossible" to effectively execute fiscal policy. Alternatively, he has given two solutions on how to fix it!

Question 2

This is another 'main idea' but for one paragraph, so we can lean on our outline fairly heavily.

(A): this matches, almost verbatim, what should be in almost any label for ¶3, and is correct.

(B): this is a FUD, as it's mixing up consolidation with coordination mechanisms, as well as the fact the author never really advocates for those.

(C): even though the author states that "fragmentation….is...even more extreme in the Congress", this is not a comparison used for the purpose of criticism. This is a DIST.

(D): the word "hopeless" here is a DIST as there is no language to conclude that.

Question 3

All four choices are somewhere in the passage and three of them are supported by explanation, example, or evidence but one is not. Use the outline, find them as quickly as you can, and pick the right one.

This is a great question to consider discussing triaging and even though this question isn't overly "difficult" it can be time consuming.

(A): this is followed by one of the three things in ¶4 and is OPP.

(B): this is followed by one of the three things in ¶4 and is OPP. The two solutions "...move in two quite different directions" and are "contrasting view[s]".

(C): this is followed by example in ¶1 and is OPP.

(D): this is the last sentence of the passage, with none of the three given, so it is correct.

Question 4

This classic stem ("Which of the following, if true…") is indicative of a strengthen/weaken beyond the text question so use a strategic, and logical approach.

We want something that would strengthen the author's argument about fiscal policy making. Well, what was the argument? In a nutshell: that fragmentation of power hampers it!

(A): this is wrong all over, and should be seen as such. The passage is never discussing a global perspective so "countries" already should worry us, but even if you miss that "electoral systems" should scream OS. This was never, anywhere, part of the discussion.

(B): remember that for this type of question, we have to somewhat turn down our "extreme finder" radar. We're told to take all of the choices as true, so whether or not the author may have been extreme about something doesn't matter, only how this choice can relate to the author's argument. In other words, we can't immediately discount or eliminate an answer that has an extreme word in this type of question.

So, if presidents have only been successful in making new policies when their own party controls Congress, what element is not present? Division of power! There is no division of power, theoretically, if the president and congress are both the same party. So if they were only successful when there is no division of power, then that would support the author who argues that division of power makes it difficult to be successful.

(C): even though this answer sounds logical, the reelection of congressional members is never a focus of the passage so we cannot say whether or not this would strengthen the author's argument.

(D): this distractor is also "good" in the aspect that it sounds logical, and might even be true in the real world. The problem is that it's OS, as public opinion is not a major topic and we can't relate it to the author's argument.

Question 5

The word "suppose" indicates that this is a stengthen/weaken (beyond) question type.

A strategic way to attack this type of question, once you see the word 'suppose' is to tell yourself, "I'm about to be given something outside of the passage, that I have to relate to something very specific in the passage and answer the question." Remember that it's necessary for the new information to be related to something, somewhere in the passage.

New question info: in the mid 1980s congress tried to lessen government in the domestic economy

The only place this is discussed in the passage is ¶1, so go back there and get the relevant passage info.

Related passage info: the president tried to lessen government in domestic economy, and failed.

So, we're pretending that congress wanted to do the same exact thing the president wanted to do which means that there is no more division of power. But, what was the outcome? It failed! So, even though there was no division of power, it failed, which means it goes against what the author argued.

(A): this is an OPP as we know it should weaken (but also, the author never says the presidents are largely responsible)

(B): this is an OPP as we know it should weaken

(C): this nails the exact relationship and is correct.

(D): even though we know that the author argued,, "...fragmentation of power and responsibility is...even more extreme in the Congress" the new information in the question does not weaken that portion of the author's argument. So this is a FUD.

Question 6

This is an inference question requiring us to pick an answer that someone who is an advocate of auto-pilot would endorse. So, use the outline to go back and refresh on what auto-pilot is exactly, then put yourself in the shoes of an auto-pilot zealot, and pick the one that makes sense.

Essentially, auto-pilot folks do not trust politicians. They feel politicians do not make decisions that have the best interest of the people in mind! A couple of examples are also given on how this can be implemented: a fixed monetary growth path, or constitutionally required budget balance.

(A): this is correct, and mirrors exactly what we see in ¶4

(B): this is a FUD as it alludes to the suggestion given in the last sentence of ¶2. Wrong paragraph, not dealing with auto-pilot!

(C): this is an OPP, and is the position of someone in the "accountability" approach, not auto-pilot!

(D): this is completely OS, as the judicial branch of government (i.e. supreme court) is never discussed, so we cannot make any conclusions about it for any question!