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Page: ([Previous](#)) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ([Next](#))
CAT 2014 MBA Preparation Articles -> Critical Reasoning Basics- 3: Syllogisms
by [Kumar Abhishek](#) - Thursday, 3 June 2010, 01:19 AM

With my ITT JEE rank of 433, I would have got Mechanical engineering at both IIT Kanpur and IIT Delhi. My mother obviously assumed I would choose IITK as it was very near to my home. I was also sure about joining IITK. But the day I attended a counselling at IIT Kanpur, a place 18 km away from the city, I decided I did not want to be cloistered in place where the only thing I could do was to study. So I chose IIT Delhi over IITK. If I had not come to IIT Delhi, I would have never felt embarrassed about my English-speaking skills by looking at my suave sophisticated batchmates. I would have not taken the decision to learn the dictionary or to read novels. If I had not started reading- the love of my life- I would not have discovered another love of my life: Writing. I took all the writing courses offered at IIT Delhi; Dr. Alok Rai, Makarand Paranjpe, V. Sanil, etc. were some of the luminaries under whom I studied literature. Not only that, if I had not come to Delhi, I would not have discovered one more love of my life: the game of Bridge. With one of my IIT batchmates, I travelled without ticket in trains to Lucknow or Jaipur to play bridge tournaments. We were the youngest players in the national arena. We won our first national championship at Chandigarh.

Got our pictures in the newspapers too. In fact the passion for the game became so strong that when the rest of our batchmates were writing GRE or taking CAT in our final year, we were dreaming of playing in the Bermuda Bowl, the world bridge championship. There were only two countries we used to dream of going to- US and Italy, the meccas of bridge. In fact, after two years in my job, and having played in three nationals, I got a chance to go to Italy, and I jumped at it. Where most Indians, going abroad for the first time, dreamt of girls and booze, I dreamt of learning bridge under the experts. And I did the same. I played bridge every day of my life in Italy. Unfortunately, my visa expired and I had to come back. And I landed in India, unemployed. If I had not gone to Italy, I would have been still working in my plum job. The next thing I knew, I joined a premier institute for CAT, as a student. I soon got an offer to join as an instructor and since I was jobless I accepted. In 2005, on suggestion of my boss, I took GMAT also besides CAT. I scored a 770 and cleared CAT also. I decided to apply to top BSchools through the former score in 2006 and let my CAT score go. By 2006, I had started TotalGadha.com. My experience as an instructor and my writing skills gathered throughout these years both played a huge part in shaping TG.com.

What is the point of this narrative? Simply this- today when I look back, my present is related to so many ifs, so many decisions, and so many moments in the past that it is hard to decide whether it is fate or it is only me writing my own destiny. What if I had not come to delhi? What if I had not learnt English? What if I had not loved bridge and gone to Italy? What if I had not prepared for CAT or joined as an instructor? What if I had joined an IIMs and ignored my GMAT score? Not only that, what if I had never met Dagny (we met in our CAT coaching)? So many questions. If this is not fate then what is it?

While you reason this out, here is the tool of logic that our Kumar Sir is providing through his critical reasoning series. This chapter deals with reasoning through premises. It is called syllogisms. - **Total Gadha**

Broadly, you need to understand two types of arguments. We have already come to see what arguments look like. Now it is time to comprehend some 'categories' of arguments.

Analyse this, (P1= Premise 1, P2= Premise 2, C= Conclusion)

P1 – All men are buffoons.

P2 – Ravi (poor chap) is a man.

C – Ravi is a buffoon.

This kind of argumentation is known as deductive reasoning. Here, the conclusion arrived at, is a logical 'necessity', which you will find me referring to henceforth as an LN. The structure of the deductive argumentation is simple. We picked a set, gave it a characteristic (P1), picked an element

P.S. I hope you understand that my sympathies with Ravi have nothing to do with the argument.

Now, the second type,

P1 – Ravi is an engineer.

P2 – Ravi is a fool.

C – All engineers are fools.

While many of you may express surprise, nay, even disdain for such argumentation, it is still deemed a valid form of argumentation. So much so, that we would not have had the evolutionary history if mankind had refused to allow room for such argumentation. Appalled? Do not be. All knowledge has been attained and transferred through this form of reasoning for thousands of years now in the evolution of 'life'. This form of argumentation is known as 'Inductive logic'. Here, the conclusion arrived at is not an LN but a logical 'possibility' (LP). The conclusion that we derived here 'may or may not' be true. And hence we call it an LP.

I hope you understand the structural difference between the two types of reasoning. Inductive reasoning suggests that if some (read 'one') elements of a set show a characteristic, others will too. In fact, you SHALL find yourself arguing many a time with exactly the same structure. Stereotypes, such as 'women cannot drive', 'engineers are an intelligent species', 'politicians are corrupt', 'people with work experience have a better chance of getting into a B-School' etc. are born of the same category of argumentation. While it is easy to refute such an argument as having a conclusion that you do NOT agree with, do understand that it MAY just be true! It is just that we do not possess information about the rest of the elements of the set and hence cannot say for certainty whether the conclusion will be correct or incorrect.

Also, do not be emotional with the variables- 'engineers', 'fools', 'men' etc. They are just representative and should be deemed as X's and Y's.

All said and done, when you are attempting a question, you must always try to look for a 'logical necessity' as an answer, not a 'logical possibility'. We mark LP as an answer only if the answer choices do not HAVE a necessity answer choice in the first place.

One more thing before we move on to the next topic. DO NOT include anything external to the premises in the conclusion. For example, if

P1 – All women are intelligent.

P2 – Sita is a woman.

C – Sita is an intelligent woman.

This is specious reasoning. Our P1 does not state 'intelligent women', but simply 'intelligent'.

Takeaways

- In questions, we are looking for LN's, not LP's. We shall mark LP as an answer choice only in the absence of an LN.
- Do not take the variables of the questions to heart, treat them as X's and Y's.
- Do not add anything external to the premises in the conclusion.

There are four basic premises to understand in syllogisms.

a) All X are/is Y.

b) No X are/is Y.

c) Some X are/is Y.

d) Some X are/is not Y.

Let us deal with each in totality.

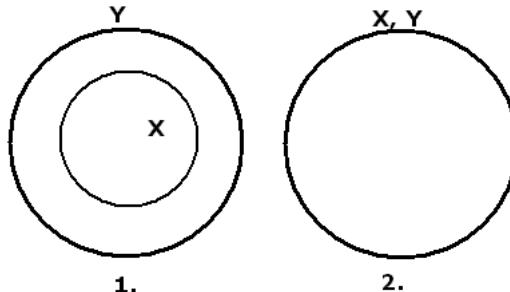
a) **All X is/are Y.**

This statement comes under the 'universal positive' category. But that is elementary and not worth keeping in mind. What you really need to understand in this statement is that the usage of 'is/are' is

not important; whatever verb appears here will be independent of interpretation. The simple translation of this statement is that all the elements of set X will also be elements of set Y.

Another important thing to note is that, even if the statement does not have the prefix 'all', (e.g. x is y) it will have the same interpretation.

Let us also try and understand this with Venn diagrams.



The second diagram shows a possibility that exists, in that the two sets X and Y are overlapping.

While solving questions, you should use the first diagram. And, as I have stated earlier, do not get emotionally involved in trying to picturise the verb. The trick is- find out the verb, then recognise the 'doer' of the verb (i.e. the 'subject' of the sentence) and put the subject in the inner circle, while the object occupies the outer circle.

For example,

All men are blue.

Here, the verb is 'are', and the subject 'all men'. Hence the set of 'men' will be represented by the inner circle, and the set of 'blue' by the outer circle.

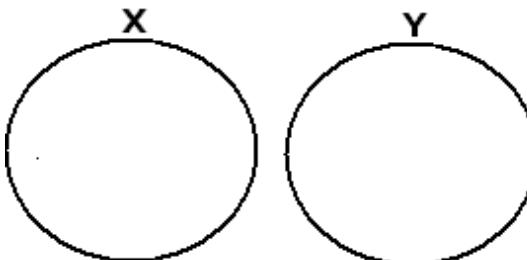
Sometimes, if one becomes paranoid about being able to picturise stuff, things can get tricky. For example, if the statement were "monkeys have brains", one would be tempted to draw the outer circle to represent the monkeys. Do NOT be tricked by the verb. Follow the same rule that I have mentioned earlier. The verb here is "have", the doer of which is "monkeys". Hence, make the inner circle to represent monkeys and the outer to represent brains.

On a parting note, do remember

- The presence or absence of the prefix "all" does not matter. The statement shall still be treated as mentioned above. Hence "all X is Y", is the same as "X is Y".
- Put the subject of the sentence in the 'inner' circle.
- For solving a question, use the first diagram. The second diagram is a possibility to be kept in mind for solving CR/ RC questions.

b) No X is/are Y.

This is a rather simpler statement to understand. It means that no elements of set X are elements of set Y. Simply put, the elements of the two have nothing in common. These can be easily represented as disjoint sets, i.e. two circles, not touching each other anywhere.



However, there are some other important things to learn here. Please understand that this premise (which, incidentally, comes under the 'universal negative' category) has some misrepresentations as well. Many people try to represent the opposite of 'all X is Y' as 'all X is NOT y'. Now, this is fallacious, since such a negation becomes dubious to interpret and hence ambiguous. Premises in logic cannot afford to be ambiguous, since it is they who set the stage for the conclusion to follow.

You just have to try different emphasis points in this kind of negation to understand what I mean.

All engineers are not fools. (Implies that no engineer is a fool)

All engineers are not fools. (Implies that only some of them are. J)

Since it is semantics at play here, such a negation is considered illogical.

Similarly, a negation of the nature "Not all X are Y" has comparable problems, and hence is not deemed a valid negation of "All X are Y".

Final takeaways

- The negative of "All X is Y" is "No X is Y".
- Can be represented by disjoint sets.
- "All X are not Y" / "Not all X are Y" are invalid premises.

c) Some X are/ is Y.

Unlike the universals we have been looking at so far, where it was either an all or none case, thereby justifying the usage of the word 'universal', we now shift our focus to 'particular' premises. These premises have prefixes that look like- some, many, a lot of, most et al. Understand that these words have little representative or absolute value, until pitted against their respective 'whole' numbers. Hence our comprehension of the same will have to be careful.

Let us then agree to interpret these two statements by concurring that

- If some X are Y, then some Y must definitely be X.
- The interpretation of the prefix "some, many etc." will be "AT LEAST ONE".
- If some X are Y, it does not imply that some X are then definitely NOT Y.

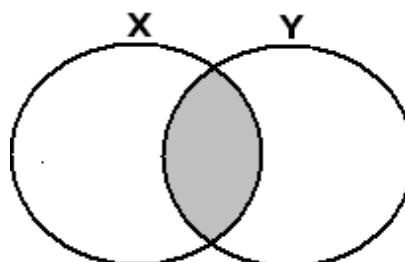
The first interpretation is fairly simple to understand. If some elements of set X are also elements of set Y, those same elements are both X and Y. Hence some elements of Y automatically become elements of set X.

The second point, when elaborated, means that in logic, the prefix 'some' in itself means nothing except "at least one". Even if the prefix is 'a lot, many, most, several' etc. our interpretation of the same shall remain 'at least one'.

Now, for the third point, some logic books state that if the premise states 'some X are y', then it definitely means that some X are NOT Y. This is bad reasoning. Just as we saw in inductive reasoning erstwhile, if some elements of a set do show a certain trait, then we cannot for certainty say EITHER that the rest *will not* show the same trait OR that they *will*. Hence, to conclude from 'Some X are Y', as a necessity, that 'Some X are not Y', is simply not correct. And henceforth you and I shall not indulge in such fallacies.

Time for a Venn interpretation.

The first diagram that I have presented below is what we shall use for solving questions. The rest are just indicative of 'possibilities' that may exist, and with which we must familiarise ourselves, for they will help us understand things better when we finally arrive at long CR questions.

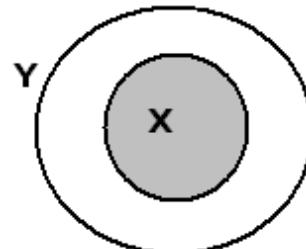


In this diagram the shaded portion represents the area in which our 'at least one X' and 'at least one Y' lie. This is the diagram we shall use for solving questions.

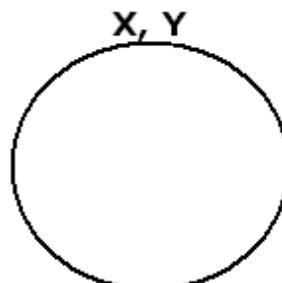




Here, the portion of X that coincides with the portion of Y is our area of concern. Also, please understand that one line of argument may state that here "aren't all Y's, X's too?" To this, a logical response is that our premise concerns itself with some of the X's being Y's, not Y's being X's. In the process, if all Y's turn out to be X's, it is just a possibility, and of course not our primary concern. We had started with trying to prove that at least one X ought to be Y, and the diagram does justice to that. (Remember, we are dealing with all the possibilities here.)



Here again, one might point out that all of the X's are Y's. However, by now, you and I understand that we had set out to prove that at least one X should be Y, and in the process if all X's DO happen to be Y's, so be it. Our one X is still safely within Set Y, and our diagram, yet again, does full justice to that.



Well, if you understood the previous diagram, you would find it easy enough to understand that this too is a possibility that exists. And again, our one X is still ensconced firmly within Set Y.

Synopsis

- If some X are Y, then some Y must definitely be X.
- The interpretation of the prefix "some, many etc." will be "AT LEAST ONE".
- If some X are Y, it does not imply that some X are then definitely NOT Y.
- For solving a question, we shall use the first diagram.

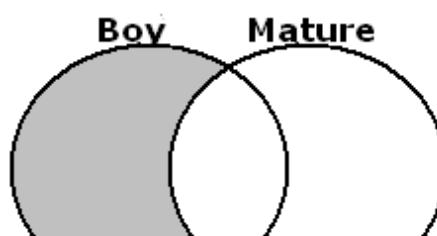
d) Some X are/is not Y.

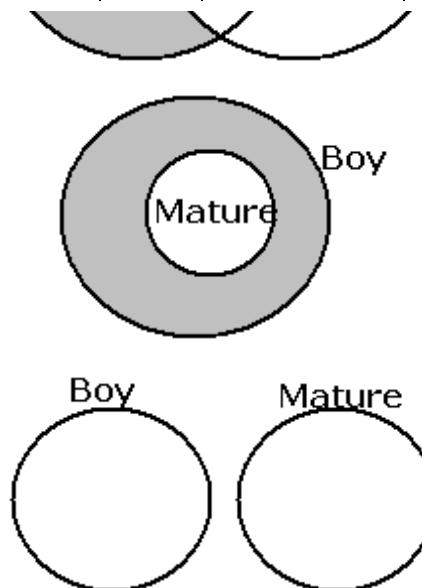
This statement has several interpretations across the globe. But we shall treat it as a logically inconsistent premise. Although the statement "Some X are not Y" CAN hold true as a conclusion, it falls flat as a premise. (Hope you remember the distinction between 'premises' and 'conclusion' well enough by now!!)

For instance, let us try with

P1 – Some boys are not mature.

Immediately with this premise you will have to go with three possible diagrams simultaneously, i.e.





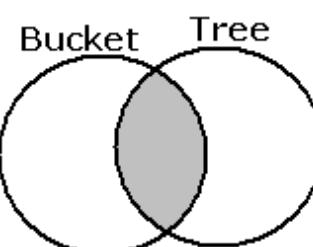
P2 – Some mature are fools/ All matures are fools/ No mature is a fool.

You understand that any of these three premises will have different impacts on the three possible diagrams that we have made. With such a scenario we shall NOT be able to arrive at a sustainable conclusion at the third stage. In syllogisms, as you must have noticed earlier, we do arrive at a conclusion at the third stage. Hence, this statement, we shall treat as an 'illogical' premise.

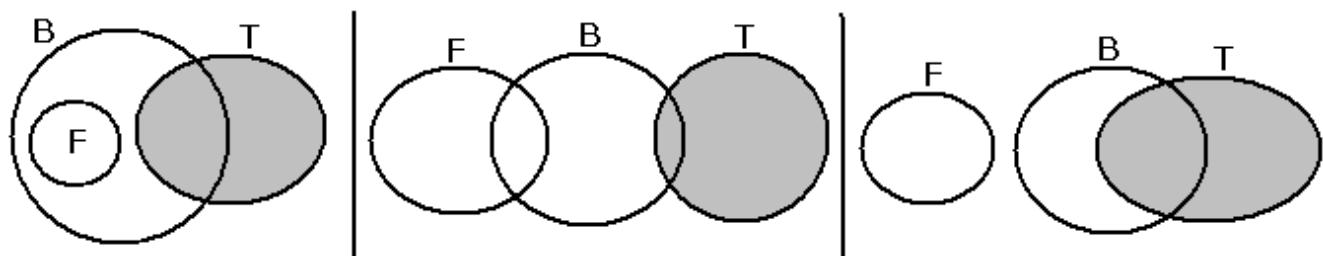
However, this statement DOES have validity as a **conclusion**.

For instance,

P1 – Some buckets are trees.



P2 – No tree is a fool



Now, in all of the three possible diagrams you can see that as an LN conclusion, we can safely say that,

Some buckets are not fools. (i.e. the buckets that lie in intersection with trees.)

Takeaways

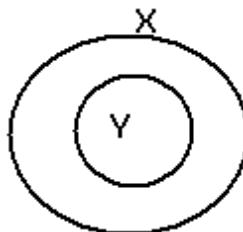
- Some X are/is not Y is a logically inconsistent premise
- Some X are/is not Y has an absolutely logical existence as a conclusion.

Finally,

Only X are/is Y.

This is the only remaining premise we need to get hold of, so far as syllogisms are concerned.

To begin with, if you encounter a statement such as "Only X are Y", quickly convert it into "All Y are X". The diagram should be simple now- Y inside, X outside. For solving a question, this much of dope should be enough.



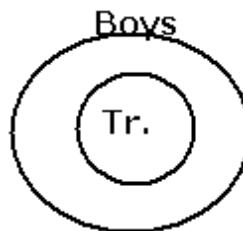
For the sceptics, however, an explanation is just what the doctor ordered!

So here we go! Let us see if the formula works or not.

P1 – Only boys wear trousers.

If this be our premise, isn't it easy to figure out that the moment I see someone wearing a pair of trousers, without even looking further, I should be safely able to conclude that the person is a 'boy'? What I mean is that since the premise explicitly states that only boys can wear trousers, then nobody else can wear them. Therefore if someone is wearing trousers, the person OUGHT to be a boy, else our premise falls. Hence, is it not easy to figure out that 'All trousers can be worn by boys only'? Well, you've got it now!

If, "only boys wear trousers", then "all trousers are worn by boys"! Simple!



Takeaway

- Convert "only X are Y" to "All Y are X", and then work with what you have learnt from the "all" prefix statements, i.e. make Y the inner circle and X the outer circle.

One final word - While solving questions in syllogisms, do remember that the conclusion should be derived using *both* of the previous two premises, and *not one premise alone*. For example,

1. All babies are black.
2. My baby is cute.

Conclusion- My baby is black.

This is incorrect since the conclusion can be derived using the first premise itself.

Time for you to jump into deeper waters!!

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CAT 2014 MBA Preparation Articles -> Critical Reasoning Basics- 3: Syllogisms -> Re: Critical Reasoning Basics- 3: Syllogisms

by Kumar Abhishek - Thursday, 3 June 2010, 12:53 AM

Exercise

Directions for questions 1- 8: Choose the set of three statements where the third statement can be logically derived from the previous two.

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. 1. All Tricks are Loops. | 2. No Puzzles are Loops. | | | |
| 3. All Puzzles are Tricks. | 4. No Puzzles are Tricks. | | | |
| 5. All Puzzles are Loops. | 6. All Loops are Tricks. | | | |
| A. 341 | B. 642 | C. 352 | D. 156 | E. 631 |
|
 | | | | |
| 2. 1. All Spaces are Bust. | 2. No Curves are Spaces. | | | |
| 3. Some Curves are not Squares. | 4. Some Squares are Bust. | | | |
| 5. All Spaces are Squares. | 6. All Squares are Curves. | | | |
| A. 514 | B. 124 | C. 316 | D. 523 | E. 513 |
|
 | | | | |
| 3. 1. All S are R. | 2. All G are S. | | | |
| 3. All Y are R. | 4. Some M are Y. | | | |
| 5. All Y are S. | 6. No S are M. | | | |
| A. 654 | B. 153 | C. 361 | D. 145 | E. 564 |
|
 | | | | |
| 4. 1. Some T are S. | 2. Some S are B. | | | |
| 3. No T are B. | 4. All T are S. | | | |
| 5. All B are S. | 6. No S are B. | | | |
| A. 165 | B. 463 | C. 245 | D. 541 | E. 425 |
|
 | | | | |
| 5. 1. All cows are green. | 2. Some Green are Red. | | | |
| 3. Some Green eat Grass. | 4. All Green are Yellow. | | | |
| 5. Some Cows eat Grass. | 6. Some Yellow are Brown. | | | |
| A. 123 | B. 153 | C. 364 | D. 423 | E. 621 |

6. 1. Some footballers are cricketers. 2. All musicians are footballers.
 3. Some guitarists are musicians. 4. All cricketers are footballers.
 5. All cricketers are musicians. 6. Some guitarists are footballers.

A. 643 B. 264 C. 542 D. 321 E. 236

7. 1. No man is a tree. 2. All fools are smokers.
 3. Some men are smokers. 4. All trees are smokers.
 5. All trees are fools. 6. All smokers have cancer.

A. 345 B. 154 C. 354 D. 524 E. 126

8. 1. All great men are thinkers. 2. No woman is a thinker.
 3. Napoleon is a thinker. 4. Napoleon is great.
 5. No women are great men. 6. All women are great.

A. 143 B. 431 C. 251 D. 625 E. 215

Evaluate the following syllogisms (Q no. 9-16) and assess whether the argument is valid (i.e. LN) or invalid (i.e. LP).

9. No physical actions are chance occurrences. All chance occurrences are random events. No random events are physical actions.
10. All things describable by science are predictable events. No free decisions are things describable by science. No free decisions are predictable events.
11. No things describable by science are uncaused happenings. All mental decisions are things describable by science. No mental decisions are uncaused happenings.
12. All persons who are most free are person who decide most. All persons who decide least are persons who are most free. All persons who decide least are persons who decide most.
13. Some snakes are dangerous creatures, for some snakes are poisonous animals and some poisonous animals are dangerous creatures.
14. Some foreign cars are vehicles sold in America because all Triumphs are foreign cars and some Triumphs are vehicles sold in America.
15. No loving persons are thoughtless persons. No loving persons are aggressive people. No aggressive people are thoughtless persons.
16. If anything is metallic, then it is breakable. There are breakable ornaments. Therefore they are metallic ornaments.

17. Find the valid argument(s) in the arguments given below.

1. Some cricketers snore. Some snorers sleep. Some cricketers sleep.
 2. All greats grate. Some greats cheat. Some graters cheat.
 3. No fillers fall. Some who fall are peelers. No peeler is a filler.
 4. All claws are clauses. No clause is a paw. No paws are claws.
- A. Only 1
B. 2 and 4
C. Only 4
D. 1 and 3
E. Only 2

18. Find the valid argument(s) in the arguments given below.

1. Some cars are automatic. Some automatic are phones. Some cars are phones.
 2. All preachers lie. Some liars are honest. Some preachers are honest.
 3. All wolves are cunning. No cunning is a sly. No wolf is a sly.
 4. Some bacon is fatty. All fatty are cancerous. Some bacon is cancerous.
- A. 1 and 3 B. Only 4 C. 3 and 4 D. 2 and 4 E. Only 2

19. Find the valid argument(s) in the arguments given below.

1. All famous women are jaunty. Phoolan is famous. Phoolan is jaunty.
 2. No big bird lays eggs. Ostriches are big. No ostrich lays eggs.
 3. Hunting is a banned sport. Skiing is a banned sport. Hunting and skiing are similar.
 4. Airtel is bigger than MTNL. MTNL is bigger than Hutch. Airtel is the biggest out of the three.
- A. 1, 2 and 4
B. Only 1
C. 1 and 2, but not 4
D. 2 and 4
E. Only 4

20. Find the valid argument(s) in the arguments given below.

1. Only frogs fly. Only those who fly, fall. Frogs fall.
 2. All blues are black. Some black are white. Some blues are white.
 3. Only blues are black. Some black are white. Some blues are white.
 4. All gamers are intelligent. Some intelligent men are tall. Some gamers are tall.
- A. Only 3

- B. 1 and 3
- C. Only 4
- D. 2 and 4
- E. 3 and 4

21. Find the valid argument(s) in the arguments given below.

- 1. No curtain hides the truth. All men hide the truth. No curtain is a man.
 - 2. Catches win matches. Some catches were dropped. Match was lost.
 - 3. No batsman is great. No bowler is great. Some batsmen are bowlers.
 - 4. Only pillows are comforting. Trees are pillows. Trees are comforting.
-
- A. 1 and 4
 - B. Only 4
 - C. 1, 2 and 4
 - D. Only 2
 - E. Only 1

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GMAT 2014 Verbal Forum -> Manhattan SC Doubts -> Re: Manhattan SC Doubts

by Kumar Abhishek - Tuesday, 1 June 2010, 12:52 PM

Hi all...

A majority of the, a large percentage of the, two thirds of the, some of the, etc. are known as 'determiner phrases'. The rule for such determiner phrases is that the 'determined' determines the verb, i.e.

A majority of the CARS were parked outside.

A majority of the PARLIAMENT is against the motion.

A large percentage of the VOTERS are going to vote for him.

Two-thirds of my WORK remains unfinished.

Two-thirds of the PRISONERS are missing.

Some of the MILK has been sold.

Some of the GIRLS are at work.

Hence, "A majority of COMMUTERS read or listen....."

Hope it helps...



CAT 2014 Verbal Lessons -> Critical Reasoning Basics- 2

by Kumar Abhishek - Monday, 19 April 2010, 06:54 PM



Sometimes it is necessary to ask 'Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG)' questions to put your goalposts and milestones in perspective. For example, a CAT 2010 aspirants should regularly question himself "Am I a 100 percentiler yet?" This question has lot more to it than it seems. First, half of you would not even dare to ask this question as you do not possess the belief that you can be a 100 percentiler. That means you would not be even 99 percentiler and the race for CAT is already over for you. For those who DO believe that they can be a 100 percentiler, the question would really make you ask yourself if you are doing enough to become one. You would realize the slackness that you have fallen into or the weak areas that you need to look into. In short, it would bring back the steel that you need so badly. The catch is that if you are not stupid enough to dream to be supreme, the biggest, and the best, do not dare to dream at all. Once you decide to be the best, biggest, or the most famous at what you want,

everything else will fall into place.

Today's chapter is a continuation of the [critical reasoning series](#) that Kumar Sir has agreed to write. I am loving his simple and lucid way of explanation. I sincerely hope you would too. Please do attempt the subjective questions at the end of the lesson. Good Luck!- **Total Gadha**

As we begin a new chapter, let us reminisce what we had learnt earlier. We had, in the previous lesson, come to understand that an argument has broadly two parts, a conclusion and a premise. Starting with small arguments, we had dealt with some bigger arguments having multiple premises at times.

Before we jump to handling CR questions, let us understand a couple of things more, since they are going to play a crucial role in our broader comprehension of logic *per se* in the coming weeks.

Now that you have understood what premises and conclusions stand for, it would be handy to keep some special things in mind:

- A. Premises **CANNOT** be negated.
- B. An argument with only one premise is typically a weak argument.
- C. A premise which is an opinion in itself leads to weak argumentation.
- D. All the rules of 'syllogism' stand their ground in CR as well.

A. Premises CANNOT be negated.

In arguments, premises are considered sacrosanct and cannot be negated. Many a time, when asked to weaken an argument, people start negating the premises. While this may work in real-life situations (where fools are often found *arguing!*), it does not in CR questions. If an option directly negates what has been mentioned in the argument's premise, then it is NOT the answer.

Consider the following argument:

X : Ravi is a good boy because he helps others.

If asked to weaken this argument, one CANNOT argue by saying "No! He does not help others, and hence is not a good boy." This is what I fondly call **BHASAD**. 😊

A classic way of weakening this argument could be to point at the fact that merely 'helping' others does not sufficiently lead to the conclusion that Ravi is a good boy. OR, by saying "Agreed that he helps others, but he does not pay his taxes, beats up his father, routinely kicks his neighbour's dog" etc...OR, by explaining that the so called "others" here, refers to a bunch of (in)famous/wanted dacoits!!!

All these would help undermine the conclusion and unfortunately, in the light of fresh evidence, Ravi would no longer be as eligible a bachelor.

Let us look at this one for instance:

X : It will rain tomorrow.

Y : No, it will not!

X : Yes, it will!! I see black clouds in the sky.

Y : Well, I don't!!

And there you go.....BHASAD at its best!!!!

B. An argument with only one premise is typically a weak argument.

We DID observe this in the previous examples, didn't we? It is easy to refute or weaken an argument with only one leg (read premise). Classically, we refute such arguments by agreeing with the premise but citing the insufficiency of the conclusion drawn on the basis of only one instance.

For example:

X : *It will rain tomorrow.*

Y : *No, it will not!*

X : *Yes, it will!! I see black clouds in the sky.*

Y : *There had been black clouds yesterday too, but it hadn't rained.*

Another way of refuting such arguments is to cite other instances which take away the credentials of the conclusion drawn (as we did with the Ravi/good boy argument).

C. A premise which is an opinion in itself leads to weak argumentation.

Consider the value of the following arguments.

- *He is not a good man because I do not like him.*
- *Seher is not a good film because many people disliked it.*
- *The accident must have been caused by her because women cannot drive well.*

Hope you get the point.

Also, words like good, bad, weak, strong etc. are opinionated/relative and provide little logical or absolute value in arguments. Ideally, they should not have a place in premises. Premises are taken as *true* facts in the context of the argument, and hence, cannot be negated either (as stated somewhere above). Usage of opinionated words in the premises takes away the sacrosanct value attached to the premises, and therefore should be avoided.

Exercise

This is a subjective exercise and you are free to use your argumentative skills. Find as many logical holes in the arguments as you can. And do remember that the world is watching. So do not be miffed if someone picks holes in YOUR logic. These days, as I learnt sometime back, even 8-9 years old ones are keeping a close watch! ;)

Find the flaw/s in the following arguments:-

1. Mr. Gupta: I don't believe Sharma Ji will win the election for governor. Few voters are willing to elect a businessman with no political experience to such a responsible public office.
2. A law requiring companies to offer employees unpaid time off to care for their children will harm the economic competitiveness of our nation's businesses. Companies must be free to set their own employment policies without mandated parental-leave regulations.
3. Are you still reading the other newspaper in town? Did you know that the *Daily Bagula* is owned by an out-of-town business syndicate that couldn't care less about the people of Jungle City? Read the *Daily Cheel*, the only *real* voice of the people of Jungle City!
4. Alibaba: I don't intend to vote for Senator Farzana in the next election. She is not a strong supporter of the war against crime.
5. At an enormous research cost, a leading chemical company has developed a manufacturing process for converting wood fibers into a plastic. According to the company, this new plastic can be used for, among other things, the hulls of small sailboats. But what does the company think sailboat hulls used to be made of? Surely the mania for high technology can scarcely go further than this.
6. Ravan: Using extraneous incentives to get teenagers to change their attitude toward school and schoolwork won't work. Take the program in West Virgunj, for instance, where they tried to reduce their dropout rate by revoking the driving licenses of kids who left school. The program failed miserably.
7. Historically, women have suffered a lot of suppression and hence need reservation in all spheres. This is the only logical way to uplift them and bring them on par with men.

8. No nation can long survive unless its people are united by a common tongue. For proof, we need only consider Canada, which is being torn asunder by conflicts between French-speaking Quebec and the other provinces, which are dominated by English speakers.

9. As part of our program to halt the influx of illegal immigrants, the administration is proposing the creation of a national identity card. The card would be available only to Indian citizens and to registered aliens, and all persons would be required to produce the card before they could be given a job. Of course, such a system holds the potential, however slight, for the abuse of civil liberties. Therefore, all personal information gathered through this system would be held strictly confidential, to be released only by authorized personnel under appropriate circumstances. Hence, there would be no abuse of civil liberties.

10. A sociologist recently studied two sets of teenagers. The members of one set spent 10 or more hours per week watching violent television programs, and the members of the other set spent 2 hours or less per week watching violent television programs. A significantly greater proportion of the teenagers in the former group exhibited aggressive behavior during the period of the study. The sociologists reasoned that the prolonged exposure to television violence caused the aggressive behavior.

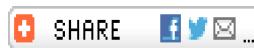
D. All the rules of 'syllogism' stand their ground in CR as well.

This requires a full fledged chapter. Keep watching this space.

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by Kumar Abhishek - Friday, 16 April 2010, 02:20 PM

Hi Prashant

Your query is quite justified, since there seems to be an agreement problem here. If it were a stand-alone sentence, I would be as concerned. But, in the flow of the passage it is completely standard and formal usage. So, even though the verb for 'conclusion' (if used separately) should be 'is', in THIS sentence, there is no need to modify it. Standard Dickensian usage! 😊

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