

GMAT AWA Sample 15

Sample Prompt 1

The following appeared as part of an article in the book section of a newspaper:

“Currently more and more books are becoming available in electronic form—either free-of-charge on the Internet or for a very low price-per-book on compact disc.* Thus literary classics are likely to be read more widely than ever before. People who couldn’t have purchased these works at bookstore prices will now be able to read them for little or no money; similarly, people who find it inconvenient to visit libraries and wait for books to be returned by other patrons will now have access to whatever classic they choose from their home or work computers. This increase in access to literary classics will radically affect the public taste in reading, creating a far more sophisticated and learned reading audience than has ever existed before.”

*A compact disc is a small portable disc capable of storing relatively large amounts of data that can be read by a computer.

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 2

The following appeared as an editorial in a magazine concerned with educational issues:

“In our country, the real earnings of men who have only a high-school degree have decreased significantly over the past 15 years, but those of male college graduates have remained about the same. Therefore, the key to improving the earnings of the next generation of workers is to send all students to college. Our country’s most important educational goal, then, should be to establish enough colleges and universities to accommodate all high school graduates.”

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 3

The following appeared as part of an article in a trade magazine for breweries:

“Magic Hat Brewery recently released the results of a survey of visitors to its tasting room last year. Magic Hat reports that the majority of visitors asked to taste its low-calorie beers. To boost sales, other small breweries should brew low-calorie beers as well.”

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 4

The following appeared in a memorandum sent by a vice-president of the Nadir Company to the company's human resources department:

"Nadir does not need to adopt the costly 'family-friendly' programs that have been proposed, such as part-time work, work at home, and job-sharing. When these programs were made available at the Summit Company, the leader in its industry, only a small percentage of employees participated in them. Rather than adversely affecting our profitability by offering these programs, we should concentrate on offering extensive training that will enable employees to increase their productivity."

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 5

The following appeared in a letter to prospective students from the admissions office at Plateau College:

"Every person who earned an advanced degree in science or engineering from Olympus University last year received numerous offers of excellent jobs. Typically, many graduates of Plateau College have gone on to pursue advanced degrees at Olympus. Therefore, enrolling as an undergraduate at Plateau College is a wise choice for students who wish to ensure success in their careers."

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 6

The following was excerpted from an article in a farming trade publication:

"Farmers who switched from synthetic to organic farming last year have seen their crop yields decline. Many of these farmers feel that it would be too expensive to resume synthetic farming at this point, given the money that they invested in organic farming supplies and equipment. But their investments will be relatively minor compared to the losses from continued lower crop yields. Organic farmers should switch to synthetic farming rather than persist in an unwise course. And the choice to farm organically is financially unwise, given that it was motivated by environmental rather than economic concerns."

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 7

The following appeared as part of an article in a computer magazine:

"A year ago Apex Manufacturing bought its managers computers for their homes and paid for telephone connections so that they could access Apex computers and data files from home after normal business hours. Since last year, productivity at Apex has increased by 15 percent. Other companies can learn from the success at Apex: given home computers and access to

company resources, employees will work additional hours at home and thereby increase company profits.”

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 8

The following appeared in the editorial section of a local paper:

“Applications for advertising spots on KMTV, our local cable television channel, decreased last year. Meanwhile, a neighboring town’s local channel, KOOP, changed its focus to farming issues and reported an increase in advertising applications for the year. To increase applications for its advertisement spots, KMTV should focus its programming on farming issues as well.”

Discuss how well reasoned . . . etc.

Sample Prompt 9

The following appeared in the editorial section of a national news magazine:

“The rating system for electronic games is similar to the movie rating system in that it provides consumers with a quick reference so that they can determine if the subject matter and contents are appropriate. This electronic game rating system is not working because it is self-regulated and the fines for violating the rating system are nominal. As a result, an independent body should oversee the game industry, and companies that knowingly violate the rating system should be prohibited from releasing a game for two years.”

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. Point out flaws in the argument’s logic and analyze the argument’s underlying assumptions. In addition, evaluate how supporting evidence is used and what evidence might counter the argument’s conclusion. You may also discuss what additional evidence could be used to strengthen the argument or what changes would make the argument more logically sound.

Sample Prompt 10

The following paragraph recently appeared in an editorial printed in the opinion section of a local newspaper:

The recent surge in violence in the southern part of the city is a result of a shortage of police officers and an absence of leadership on the part of the city council. In order to rectify the burgeoning growth of crime that threatens the community, the city council must address this issue seriously. Instead of spending time on peripheral issues such as education quality, community vitality, and job opportunities, the city council must realize that the crime issue is serious and double the police force, even if this action requires budget cuts from other city programs.

Discuss how well reasoned you find this argument. In your discussion be sure to analyze the line of reasoning and use the evidence in the argument. For example, you may need to consider what questionable assumptions underlie the thinking and what alternative explanations or counterexamples might weaken the conclusion. You can also discuss what sort of evidence would strengthen or refute the argument, what changes in the argument would make it more logically sound, and what, if anything, would help you better evaluate its conclusion.