

GMAT Critical Reasoning Practice Paper 2

Question 1

Authors writing detective stories frequently include a brilliant detective and an incompetent investigator who embark on separate paths in an attempt to solve a crime. The separate accounts frequently consist of the incompetent investigator becoming distracted by the criminals' well-planned attempts and the competent detective solving the case after a violent confrontation. Many literary analysts believe authors often choose this storyline in an attempt to provide readers additional complexity and challenge in solving the investigation.

Which of the following most logically follows from the statements above?

- A) A well-written detective story consists of an investigation being undertaken by a competent and incompetent investigator.
- B) Some authors use an incompetent investigator to show the complexities of an investigation.
- C) Authors never write stories with incompetent investigators who solve a case correctly.
- D) Authors can use the separate investigative accounts to make predicting the correct outcome of the investigation more difficult.
- E) Authors write stories with competent and incompetent investigators to show the complexity of real life.

Question 2

As a result of changes in cultural norms and dynamics, a boutique financial research company is considering implementing flex-time, which enables employees to work during any time of the day from any location as long as they are present at the office from 12:30pm to 3:30pm on weekdays. By comparison, workers currently must be in the office from 8am to 5pm. Firm management believes this change will help meet three key goals: decrease total costs, increase productivity, and improve product quality.

Which of the following, if true, most weakens the argument of firm's management?

- A) Some new costs will arise as a result of telecommuting.
- B) A similar firm tried a version of flex-time and abandoned it after a month for unknown reasons.
- C) The firm in question performs work that requires frequent and extensive in-person collaboration.
- D) The firm in question recently lost its most experienced research analyst due to his perception of the firm's poor work-life balance.
- E) The firm in question works on projects that often take weeks to complete.

Question 3

Most scientists believe that the decay of the ozone layer is a cause of global warming. With a weaker ozone layer, additional wavelengths of light reach the earth. However, the danger posed by ozone decay is not limited to global warming. The decay of the ozone layer, which enables more harmful wavelengths of light to reach the earth's surface, is also believed to cause permanent eye damage in some animals.

Which of the following is most strongly supported by the statements above?

- A) All wavelengths of light from the sun that damage the eyes of animals are blocked by a healthy ozone layer.
- B) Some animals do not experience damage to their eyes when exposed to unfiltered waves of light.
- C) Only a handful of animal species live in places where they are exposed to the damaging light waves.
- D) The rising temperature of the earth poses a severe threat to animals.
- E) Some wavelengths of light that engender eye damage in certain animals are more likely to hit the earth due to ozone decay.

Question 4

As a result of implementing an experimental farming system that combined aggressive new fertilization, deep irrigation, and speculative pesticides, the yield on crops at a farm in central California grew consistently and considerably over the past six years. However, yields this year unexpectedly plummeted, causing the farm's owners considerable financial difficulties.

Which of the following statements, if true, best explains the unexpected drop in yield?

- A) As a result of a serious and recent economic recession, the market for the products the farm produced shrank in size during the past year.
- B) Other farms that began using the experimental system at about the same time also reported an unexpected plummet in yields this year.
- C) The central California region where the farm in question is located experienced a drought 9 years ago, 3 years ago, and this past year.
- D) A different experimental system, used on a different crop, failed after two years at a farm in Iowa. Scientists later discovered that chemicals involved in this different system slowly poisoned the soil.
- E) Significant and sustained increases in agricultural productivity eventually lead to an exhaustion of important nutrients in land.

Question 5

Years ago, some in the government's intelligence community feared the work of telecommunications researchers at then-emerging private security firms. The government experts concluded that these private firms posed the biggest risk to successful government espionage. As the private security firms began publicly releasing and advertising encryption algorithms and other security products, these government experts saw support for their conclusion when an encryption algorithm that government experts could not break began appearing in countless emails.

Which of the following, if true, most weakens the conclusion of the government experts referred to above?

- A) Shortly before the government experts reached their conclusions, two private security companies each claimed to have developed "the world's strongest email encryption algorithm"
- B) The private security firms' decision to advertise their products and sell them publicly led to other members of the private sector and academia scrutinizing the encryption algorithms.
- C) An open-source encryption algorithm, developed by an academic and freely available from popular websites, is recognized by numerous ex-government code breakers as the most unbreakable algorithm ever developed.
- D) An enemy government recently succeeded in placing a spy within the government espionage operations referred to above.
- E) To strengthen the reputation of the private security firms, employees of these firms publish information about the strength of their products and the benefits of using them.

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Question 8

During the past 20 years, computer scientists focused increasingly on starting and running successful businesses. However, since businesses must be profitable, computer scientists must focus on developing products that generate profit. Consequently, computer science has lost its creative aspect.

Which of the following assumptions is most necessary in order for the conclusion above to be drawn from the argument above?

- A) All computer programs must lack creativity in order to be well received.
- B) Some computer scientists entirely disregarded creativity and chose instead to pursue profit.
- C) A program cannot be both creative and profitable.
- D) Computer scientists are obsessed with the profitability of their work.
- E) Non-profit institutions use large amounts of software.

Question 9

After thousands of miles of use, the tread on many bike tires wears down. One common theory about why tires wear down contends that the perpetual friction and heat generated by the contact between the tire and pavement erode the material on the surface of the tire. However, a local scientist who is also an avid cyclist proposed a new theory for why bike tires wear down. This scientist contended that chemicals from the road's composition and chemicals from rain residue wore down the surface of the tire.

Which of the following would best evaluate the veracity of the scientist's proposed theory?

- A) Ride a road bike aggressively through spring rain storms.
- B) Place chemicals from rain water and pavement on a bike's idle tires.
- C) Ascertain whether chemicals from the road's composition also reside within the bike's frame.
- D) Ascertain whether the bike's frame is made of rust-resistant components.
- E) Determine the number of miles that a bike tire can be used on a wet road before wearing down.

Question 10

For years, a considerable number of students on West County High School's track team complained about shin splints (*medial tibial syndrome*). However, during the most recent season, the number of students who complained about shin splints dropped significantly. School officials assert that this reduction in complaints occurred entirely as a result of the school's decision to build a new running track that provided a softer running surface, which absorbed much of the shock on the knees and shins that occurs when running and causes shin splints.

Which of the following, if true, most severely weakens the school officials' explanation for the decrease in complaints about shin splints?

- A) As a result of West County High School's adoption of better medical staff and new medical scanning devices, many students whose complaints would have been diagnosed in years past as an instance of shin splints are now diagnosed with a different condition.
- B) West County High School built its track after a number of neighboring schools with similar track teams built new tracks and each school saw the number of complaints about shin splints drop.
- C) This past season, members of West County High School's track team received and wore new and highly acclaimed shoes designed to soften the impact of running on the shin and knee.
- D) This past season, the total number of students who complained of pain while running rose.
- E) The maker of the new track claims that on average, complaints about shin splints fall 25% when its tracks are implemented.

Question 11

Automation, the trademark of a modern economy, is essential to maximizing a country's economic production while minimizing its costs. Health care executives want to increase revenues while reducing costs. Consequently, they propose significantly greater automation of health care. Yet, this should be rejected. Radical automation of health care would cause patients to lose trust in the system as the health care they would receive would lack the in-person care that studies show patients desire.

Which of the following expresses the main point of the argument?

- A) Health care should not be heavily automated
- B) Patients desire customized in-person care
- C) Trends in the general economy do not apply to the health care industry
- D) Health care executives are becoming too greedy
- E) Due to economic forces, automation of health care is eventually inevitable

Question 12

The strength of a suspension bridge rests in part on how deep the towers are anchored into the ground. During the first wave of suspension bridge construction, consistent with best-practices at the time, regulations required engineers to drill holes for the towers such that the portion of the tower below ground accounted for at least half of the height of the tower. After conducting an inspection into the depth of the holes drilled for the towers of the Watergate Bridge, constructed over 50 years ago during the first wave of suspension bridge construction, regulators noted that updated architectural norms and theory advised that the bridge's towers should be reinforced to meet anticipated increases in usage.

Which of the following is most strongly supported by the information above?

- A) In light of current architectural theory, the Watergate Bridge should be closed until reinforcements can be added.
- B) The original regulations for the depth of the suspension tower failed to anticipate future changes in demand or architectural theory.
- C) Even with the implementation of the reinforcements advocated by the new architectural norms, the bridge will still not be safe.
- D) In light of the regulators' findings, every suspension bridge built during the first wave of construction must be updated to provide additional strength and carrying capacity.
- E) The action advocated by current architectural theory should not be undertaken since there is no evidence to guarantee that the reinforcements will be adequate or advisable in light of future architectural research.

Question 13

The New Deal in America began in 1933 and included widespread bank reforms, unprecedented government infrastructure spending, and unparalleled expansion in the size of government. Some political commentators and economic historians contend that President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal singlehandedly propelled the United States out of the Great Depression and into decades of uninterrupted prosperity. To support this claim, these economists note that during the years following 1933, GDP grew, unemployment shrunk, and optimism increased.

Which of the following statements, if true, would most weaken the above argument?

- A) The considerable debt burden that the government assumed to fund the New Deal sparked fear in the minds of some economists, investors, and businessmen.
- B) The considerable government expenditures and massive labor requirements engendered by America's entry into World War II in late 1941 helped employ Americans and grow GDP.
- C) On average, GDP per capita fell and unemployment rose in many foreign countries during the years after President Roosevelt announced his New Deal.
- D) During 1939, the U.S. economy contracted sharply, unemployment jumped 5%, and America's optimism fell.
- E) U.S. GDP during the mid 1930s stood at levels much lower than 30 years later.

Question 14

Based upon the results of a recent study, the net value of assets held by young adults or for the benefit of young adults exceeds the net value of assets held by middle-age working professionals with children. The common notion that young adults or so-called "twenty somethings" are bigger spenders and smaller savers than middle-age adults is, therefore, false.

The argument is primarily flawed for which of the following reasons?

- A) The argument does not properly consider the impact of the debt financing of assets.
- B) The argument never discusses the effects of filing for bankruptcy and twenty somethings' proclivity for deficit spending leading to bankruptcy.
- C) The argument never discusses the role that the country's tax code, which encourages financial investment on the part of twenty somethings, plays.
- D) The argument does not specify the exact amounts of saving and spending on the part of each age group.
- E) The argument never considers that the study compares assets held both by or for the benefit of young adults with assets held by working adults.

Question 15

An advertisement for E-News, a subscription-only online newspaper with no ads accompanying its content, argued that individuals should subscribe to E-News so as to eliminate wasted time that results from seeing and ignoring advertisements while attempting to read newspapers that feature ads.

Which of the following, if true, most severely weakens E-News' argument?

- A) Individuals who currently read only print newspapers are much less likely to enjoy a subscription news website without first learning about reading online news through a free news website.
- B) Free ad-sponsored news websites and blogs offer more content than E-News.
- C) E-News partners with other e-content providers, many of which always show numerous ads alongside their content.
- D) For regions of the country that lack adequate internet coverage, switching to an online subscription website is not logical.
- E) E-News recently announced it would sell some of its content to ad-supported websites and print newspapers.