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## Sample LSAT Critical Reasoning Section

### 26 Questions / 35 Minutes

1. Theologian: The presence of a group of followers of Swami Rama has a pacifying spiritual effect on any town as a whole. For example, soon after a commune of the Swami's followers was established in Ford's Bend, Indiana, the number of crimes in that town dropped by 40 percent, and the suicide rate fell to zero. Thus, the power of the Swami's method of meditative serenity extends even to those merely living in the vicinity.

Which of the following, if true, most weakens the conclusion of the theologian's argument?

- (A) Prior to the establishment of the Swami's commune, the crime rate in Ford's Bend was already relatively low.
- (B) Within a year after the establishment of the Swami's commune, the population of Ford's Bend had dropped by 50 percent.
- (C) Only 2 percent of the population of Ford's Bend are members of the Swami's commune.
- (D) During the year prior to the establishment of the Swami's commune, only two persons had committed suicide in Ford's Bend.
- (E) Within a year after the establishment of the Swami's commune, two members of the commune were arrested for armed robbery.

2. Researcher: The symptoms of mental disorders are behavioral, cognitive, or emotional problems. Some patients with mental disorders can be effectively treated with psychotherapy, but it is now known that in some patients' mental disorders result from chemical imbalances affecting the brain. Thus, these patients can be effectively treated only with medication that will reduce or correct the imbalance.

The researcher's argument depends on assuming which one of the following?

- (A) Treatment by psychotherapy can produce no effective reduction in or correction of chemical imbalances that cause mental disorders.
- (B) Treatment with medication always shows faster results for patients with mental disorders than does treatment with psychotherapy.
- (C) Most mental disorders are not the result of chemical imbalances affecting the brain.
- (D) Medication is always more effective in treating patients with mental disorders than is psychotherapy.
- (E) Treatment with psychotherapy has no effect on mental disorders other than a reduction of the symptoms.

3. The Rienza, a passenger ship, sank as a result of a hole in its hull, possibly caused by sabotage. Normally when a holed ship sinks as rapidly as the Rienza did, water does not enter the ship quickly enough for the ship to be fully flooded when it reaches the ocean floor. Full flooding can be achieved, however, by sabotage. Any ship that sinks deep into the ocean when not fully flooded will implode. Deep-sea photographs, taken of the sunken Rienza where it rests on the ocean floor, reveal that the Rienza did not implode.

Which one of the following must be true on the basis of the information above?

- (A) The Rienza was so constructed as to reduce the risk of sinking by impact.
- (B) If the Rienza became fully flooded, it did so only after it reached the ocean floor.
- (C) If the Rienza was not sunk by sabotage, water flooded into it unusually fast.
- (D) If the Rienza had sunk more slowly it would have imploded.
- (E) The Rienza was so strongly constructed as to resist imploding under deep-sea pressure.

4. Philosopher: The eighteenth-century thesis that motion is absolute asserts that the change in an object's position over time could be measured without reference to the position of any other object. A well-respected physicist, however, claims that this thesis is incoherent. Since a thesis that is incoherent cannot be accepted as a description of reality and motion cannot be absolute.

The philosopher proceeds by using which one of the following argumentative techniques?

- (A) attempting to persuade by the mere use of technical terminology
- (B) using experimental results to justify a change in definition
- (C) relying on the authority of an expert to support a premise
- (D) inferring from what has been observed to be the case under experimental conditions to what is in principle true
- (E) generalizing from what is true in one region of space to what must be true in all regions of space

5. Legal historian: Some supposed defenders of freedom of the press say that they oppose censorship, provided that the press does its best to be fair and unbiased in its treatment of controversial issues. The authors of the Bill of Rights made no such provisions. Freedom of the press carries with it no responsibility to meet any standards of “fairness” or “objectivity” or “balance,” especially those established by outside arbiters: the editors and publishers of newspapers, magazines, and books.

Which of the following most logically completes the legal historian’s argument?

- (A) The press is required only to present the facts according to common sense standards of fairness, objectivity, and balance.
- (B) The press must consider first and foremost the wishes and interests of the reading public, whose support makes the publications possible in the first place.
- (C) The press is free to be as “unfair,” “biased,” and “unbalanced” in their opinions as they wish.
- (D) The press must simply provide space for their opponents to present their point of view in order to guarantee that readers are fully and honestly informed.
- (E) The press must take public responsibility to be truthful, since they are vital sources of the information needed by the citizens of a democracy.

6. Smoking in bed has long been the main cause of home fires. Over the past two decades, there has been a significant decline in the sale and consumption of cigarettes. However, there has been no comparable decline in the number of people killed in home fires.

Each one of the following statements, if true, helps to resolve the apparent discrepancy above EXCEPT:

- (A) Compared to other types of home fires, home fires caused by smoking in bed usually cause relatively little damage before they are extinguished.
- (B) Home fires caused by smoking in bed often break out after the home’s occupants have fallen asleep.
- (C) Smokers who smoke in bed tend to be heavy smokers who are less likely to quit smoking than are smokers who do not smoke in bed.
- (D) An increasing number of people have been killed in home fires that started in the kitchen.
- (E) Population densities have increased, with the result that one home fire can cause more deaths than in previous decades.

7. John works five days each week except when on vacation or during weeks in which national holidays occur. Four days a week he works in an insurance company; on Fridays he works as a blacksmith. He does not have any other jobs. Last week there were no holidays and John was not on vacation. Therefore, he must have worked in the insurance company on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday last week.

Which of the following is an assumption upon which the argument depends?

- (A) John never takes a vacation lasting longer than one week.
- (B) Every day last week that John worked, he worked for an entire workday.
- (C) John does not take vacations in weeks in which national holidays occur.
- (D) Last week John worked neither on Saturday nor on Sunday.
- (E) There were no days last week on which John both worked in the insurance company and also worked as a blacksmith.

8. Candidate: I am concerned that few judges who arbitrate cases involving high-tech companies have any relevant background; indeed, not one federal judge has a degree or any experience in computer technology. Until our judges are better able to demonstrate an understanding of the technology involved in these cases, we should view any decisions they pass down with skepticism.

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

- (A) Litigation and jurisprudence in this area concerns the moral and social value of scientific and technological developments, judgments which do not intrinsically require a sophisticated technical understanding of the material.
- (B) Computer scientists, by and large, have little interest in politics and public policy. It would be difficult to find scientists with the degree of commitment required for a serious contribution to the judicial system.
- (C) There is a lack of people who are qualified in both technical and legal areas of expertise.
- (D) There is very little opportunity, and indeed little need, for technical experts in the judicial branch. There is therefore almost no way for a technical specialist to rise through the ranks to a top-level position in government.
- (E) The rewards of a life as a judge, in terms of both money and prestige, are not high enough to attract top-flight technical experts to this area.

9. Spokesperson: Statistics released last week demonstrate that Voiture cars have had 100 sudden acceleration accidents since 1995. In 1995, Voiture switched its gas pedal manufacturer to Lead Foot, Inc. However, we have recently decided to continue to buy its gas pedals from Lead Foot, Inc. This decision will continue to keep our customers safe.

Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the spokesperson's position?

- (A) Attorneys have filed suit with Lead Foot, Inc. for faulty products.
- (B) There were fewer sudden acceleration accidents before 1995, when Voiture switched to Lead Foot, Inc.
- (C) Safety inspectors have failed to find flaws in the car's engine or gas line that could cause the unusual accelerations.
- (D) Most companies have dropped Lead Foot, Inc. in the last few years.
- (E) The 100 sudden acceleration accidents were caused by driver error. The high tension in Lead Foot's pedals helps to prevent these accidents.

10. Advertisement: A leading economist has determined that among people who used computers at their place of employment last year, those who also owned portable computers earned 25 percent more on average than those who did not. Owning a laptop computer leads to a higher- paying job.

Which one of the following identifies an error of reasoning in the advertisement?

- (A) It attempts to support a sweeping generalization on the basis of information about only a small number of individuals.
- (B) Its conclusion merely restates a claim made earlier in the argument.
- (C) It mistakes statistical correlation for logical causation.
- (D) It offers information as support for a conclusion when that information actually shows that the conclusion is false.
- (E) It projects currently existing trends indefinitely into the future.

11. Salesperson: A shopper will refuse to purchase an overpriced product if she has researched the prices of similar products at competing stores. All enthusiasts of any type of entertainment will have researched the prices of products germane to that type. Thus we will not sell any of our high-performance external graphics cards, since they are overpriced and only computer gaming enthusiasts would purchase such cards.

The pattern of reasoning in which one of the following arguments is most similar to that in the salesperson's argument above?

(A) Most amateur critics will not review a book if they have reason to believe they will not enjoy reading it. Nobody who dislikes a certain genre of music will enjoy reading a book on the history and theory of that genre. Thus nobody will review your book on the history and theory of country music, since no amateur critics enjoy listening to country music.

(B) No female guppy will mate with a male guppy if the male is visibly less healthy than other males in the school. All female guppies are aware of the relative health of the males in their school. Therefore, a visibly unhealthy male will have trouble mating.

(C) Famous actors and actresses will support an organization only if they believe that their cause is just. Patricia does not believe that the cause of Green Thumbs Up is just. Therefore, no famous actors and actresses will support Green Thumbs Up, since Patricia is a famous actress.

(D) Nobody will tour an island getaway if they believe other islands in the area have more attractive beaches. Anybody taking a vacation in this stretch of islands will have researched all of the beaches on all of the islands in the area. So our tourism agency should improve the public image of our beaches.

(E) A union will not endorse a candidate who does not support their interests if they are aware of his positions and his opponents' positions. Any union whose workers are confined to a specific sector is aware of candidates' positions relating to that sector. Only unions whose workers are confined to the education system endorse candidates for the school board, and none of our party's candidates support the interests of these unions. So none of our party's candidates for the school board will be endorsed by a union.

Questions 12-13

Philip: Over the year since the bridge toll hike, revenues from the toll have increased. However, the profits of our city's tourist trade have decreased dramatically, forcing several public attractions to be closed and reducing city revenues by an amount exceeding the increase in toll revenue. Therefore, the hike did not serve its purpose.

Matilda: It is a misrepresentation to suggest that raising the toll decreased tourism. Last year there was a well-publicized flood which affected buildings in the historic downtown area. Attendance for those attractions was consistent with previous years before the flood and following post-flood renovations.

12. Which of the following is an assumption upon which Philip's argument relies?

- (A) The bridge toll hike was a poor idea.
- (B) Tourism is an important way to maintain institutional memory for our city and to promote its public image.
- (C) Any measure that proves harmful to our city's tourist trade should be rescinded.
- (D) The purpose of the toll hike was to increase city revenues.
- (E) Tolls should not be prohibitively high, because allowing people to come to our city is a good in itself.

13. To which of the following are Philip and Matilda committed to disagreeing?

- (A) the purpose of the toll hike
- (B) the cause of the decrease in tourism
- (C) the environmental impact of commuters
- (D) whether the tourist trade's profits have decreased
- (E) whether the historic downtown area was damaged in the flood



14. Policymaker: Not all garbage dumps do not harm wildlife. Some can even be integrated into their environment and promote it. Evidence is furnished by the Masai-Mara reserve in Kenya, where baboons that use the garbage dumps on the reserve as a food source mature faster and have more offspring than do baboons on the reserve that do not scavenge on garbage.

Each of the following statements, if true, casts doubt on the policymaker's argument EXCEPT:

- (A) The baboons that feed on the garbage dump often injure themselves while foraging.
- (B) The life expectancy of baboons that eat garbage is significantly lower than that of baboons that do not eat garbage.
- (C) The cholesterol level of garbage-eating baboons is dangerously higher than that of baboons that do not eat garbage.
- (D) The population of hyenas that live near unregulated garbage landfills north of the reserve has doubled in the last two years.
- (E) The rate of birth defects for the baboon population on the reserve has doubled since the first landfills were opened.

15. People often pronounce a word differently when asked to read written material aloud than when speaking spontaneously. These differences may cause problems for those who develop computers that recognize speech. Developers "train" such computers by using samples of written material read by the people who will be using the computer. The computers recognize words based on how their users pronounce them while reading these samples.

The observations above provide most evidence for the conclusion that:

- (A) It will be impossible to develop computers that decode spontaneous speech.
- (B) When reading written material, people who have different accents pronounce the same word in the same way as one another.
- (C) Computers may be less reliable in decoding spontaneous speech than in decoding samples that have been read aloud.
- (D) A "trained" computer never correctly decodes the spontaneous speech of a person whose voice sample was used to train it.
- (E) Computers are now able to interpret oral speech without error.

16. In a typical year, most visitors to Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park are not residents of Wyoming. But most of the visitors are residents of the U.S.

If the above statements are both true, it must be true that:

- (A) most residents of the U.S. are not residents of Wyoming.
- (B) some residents of Wyoming are not visitors to Yellowstone Park.
- (C) most residents of Wyoming are residents of the U.S.
- (D) some residents of the U.S. are not residents of Wyoming.
- (E) some residents of the U.S. are not visitors to Yellowstone Park.

17. Specialist: In a routine physical, Roger was discovered to have a cancerous tumor. Although Roger did not feel sick, I advised him to undergo immediate surgery. Roger took my advice. A few months later a friend asked him whether he felt better than before his operation. Roger replied that he was weaker and had some pain, and that he had not had any pain before the operation. The friend expressed the view that the surgery had been a mistake, but Roger and I maintain that it was the right course of action.

Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the specialist's view?

- (A) Roger feels better now than he would have felt without the surgery.
- (B) Roger got opinions from two of the foremost cancer specialists in the country.
- (C) Many aspects of medical practice are based on probabilities, and Roger went with the greatest probability.
- (D) Even with the most modern methods and facilities, medicine is still more of an art than a science, and one can't really predict the outcome with any high degree of reliability.
- (E) Roger made the decision himself, and he takes the responsibility for it.

18. Recruiter: At any time, Quill Consulting employs no fewer than twenty-five and no more than thirty technical writing associates, of whom no more than eight work on a part-time or freelance basis. Company policy states that no more than five part-time or freelance workers may work from out of the office. Therefore, at any time, Quill employs at least twenty technical writing associates working in the office.

Which of the following describes a flaw in the recruiter's argument?

- (A) It assumes without justification that full-time associates are more dedicated to their work than part-time associates.
- (B) It states a causal relationship between freelancing and working from out of the office when the evidence suggests only a correlation.
- (C) It uses an analogy to a dissimilar situation to justify a questionable course of action.
- (D) It turns on the ambiguity of a key term.
- (E) It neglects the possibility that some full-time associates work from out of the office.

19. Counselor: Enrollment in computer training programs tends to be high in a strong economy and much lower during weak economic times. How individuals view future job availability, therefore, affects their willingness to pass up immediate their current employment opportunities in order to invest in career- related training.

The counselor's argument assumes that

- (A) those who enroll in computer training schools during a strong economy help increase the economy's strength.
- (B) computer training programs admit fewer students during recessions.
- (C) individuals perceive future job availability to be greater in a strong economy than in a weak economy.
- (D) the perceived likelihood of job availability has decreased in recent years.
- (E) all those who avoid computer training school during an economic slump do so because of the perceived lack of future jobs.

## Questions 20-21

20. George: Based on statistical data for the past several decades, the lower taxes are, the greater the dollar amount of contributions to charitable organizations, including food banks and homeless shelters, will be. Thus if we really want to help people, the taxes used to fund social programs should be abolished and such programs should be funded solely through private contributions..

Matthias: Your suggestion misses the fact that people only act in their own self-interest. If we abolish social programs, we must also create an incentive for private contributions to charitable organizations.

The principle behind Matthias's response is most clearly illustrated in which of the following situations?

- (A) A supermarket's automatic door breaks. After a disabled customer threatens to write a letter to a local newspaper's editor, the supermarket's management stations an employee near the entrance to hold the door open for any customer using a cane or wheelchair.
- (B) Since they began competing for the same scholarship, the top two students at a university have ceased studying together.
- (C) Despite policies against nepotism, the executive vice president offers his nephew a job in middle management at his company.
- (D) In order to avoid attention being drawn away from a fundraiser's purpose, the famous politician makes his donation anonymously.
- (E) After a particular conflict deescalated, advocacy groups shifted their efforts from lobbying for intervention to raising funds for supplies for the displaced.

21. Which of the following most accurately describes a flaw in George's argument?

- (A) It mistakes a correlation for a cause.
- (B) It assumes, without justification, that most charitable organizations will help the impoverished.
- (C) It fails to account for the effects of inflation.
- (D) It assumes, without justification, that the increase in charitable contributions will be greater than the decrease in tax revenue.
- (E) Its conclusion merely restates a key premise.

22. Market researcher: Marketing theorists have debated the role of sexual imagery in advertising. Studies have shown that consumers are more likely to pay attention to advertisements with a sexual context than non-sexual advertisements. Since consumers must pay attention to advertisements if they are to have any effect on the buying habits of consumers, it is clear that sexual content plays an important role in prompting consumers to make purchases.

Which of the following statements, if true, would most weaken the argument put forth by the researcher?

- (A) Surveys indicate that many consumers are more likely to pay attention to sexual advertising.
- (B) A small religious group has launched a campaign protesting sexual advertisements.
- (C) Attention-grabbing advertisements which employ sexuality cause viewers to ignore the product.
- (D) Advertising should be designed to inform consumers as well as to persuade them to buy.
- (E) Sexuality is inappropriate in advertisements.

23. Landlord: Any rent strike will severely damage the public image of a building's manager. If there is a moderate pest problem in a building, it is likely that tenants will not go on a rent strike. If there is an extreme pest problem, it is likely that they will. If essential services are interrupted for more than two or three days at a time, tenants will certainly go on a rent strike. Tenants of the Zebulon apartments are experiencing moderate pest problems, and earlier in the month essential services were interrupted for a week.

Which of the following can be most properly inferred based on the landlord's statements?

- (A) Many Zebulon tenants will look for housing elsewhere.
- (B) The public image of Zebulon's manager will be severely damaged.
- (C) The building's pest problems will worsen.
- (D) Zebulon tenants will probably not go on a rent strike.
- (E) The building's underlying problems were addressed by its manager.

24. Chef: On any given day, if we are offering filet mignon, we are probably offering shrimp scampi. If we are offering fettuccine alfredo, we are certainly offering linguine in clam sauce. Whenever we make a clam sauce, we offer shrimp scampi. So if we are offering fettuccine alfredo, we are probably offering filet mignon.

The flawed pattern of reasoning exhibited in the chef's statement above is most similar to that of which of the following arguments?

- (A) Whenever we sell sports cars, we sell sedans. Whenever we sell sedans, we sell minivans. If we are selling minivans, we are probably selling sports utility vehicles. So whenever we sell sedans, we are selling at least three types of cars.
- (B) If John attends the party, Ashley will as well. If Ashley attends the party, so will Kate. It is likely that if Benjamin attends the party, Kate will also be there. Thus, if John is at the party, Benjamin will probably attend, too.
- (C) When the quartet plays Brahms, the opera performs Wagner. When the symphony plays Mozart, the quartet plays Beethoven. The symphony is playing Mozart today, so the opera must not be performing Wagner.
- (D) Some students taking economics are also taking French. Some students taking French are also taking art history. No art history students are taking philosophy. Therefore, it's likely that no students are taking both philosophy and economics.
- (E) If I go to the concert, I will probably enjoy the music. If I enjoy the music, I will probably purchase the band's first album. Whenever I purchase an album, my sister hears it at some point. Thus if I go to the concert, my sister will hear the band's first album eventually.

25. Analyst: A newly developed light bulb is much more cost-effective than conventional light bulbs: it costs only about 3 times what a conventional light bulb costs but lasts up to 10 times as long as a conventional light bulb. The bulb's manufacturer has embarked upon an ambitious campaign to advertise the bulb as both inexpensive and environmentally friendly. Despite these intense efforts to publicize the advantages of the new bulb, these new bulbs will sell very poorly.

Each of the following, if true, provides support for the analyst's prediction EXCEPT:

- (A) The light generated by the new bulb is in the yellow range of the spectrum, a type of artificial light most people find unappealing.
- (B) Most people who purchase light bulbs prefer to buy inexpensive light bulbs rather than more durable but expensive light bulbs.
- (C) A manufacturer of one brand of conventional light bulb has advertised claims that the new light bulb uses more electricity than do conventional light bulbs.
- (D) The new bulb is to be marketed in several different quantities, ranging from packages containing one bulb to packages containing four bulbs.
- (E) A competing manufacturer is about to introduce a light bulb that lasts 10 times as long as a conventional bulb but costs less than a conventional bulb.

26. Student: After the disappointingly uncompetitive volleyball matches of yesterday's gym class, our teacher resolved that the four star players from the winning team would no longer be able to play together. This resolution has clearly not been followed: the teacher split us up into four teams today, but my team does not have a star player on it.

Which of the following is an assumption upon which the student's argument relies?

- (A) For a team game to be fair, skill must be evenly distributed among the teams.
- (B) A teacher who breaks his or her promises has failed to live up to his or her professional responsibilities.
- (C) Volleyball stars are born, not made.
- (D) To be satisfyingly competitive, gym class volleyball must feature more than four teams.
- (E) All of yesterday's star players are in gym class again today.

**End of test.**

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