

Verbal Questions

Critical Reasoning

Each of the critical reasoning questions is based on a short argument, a set of statements, or a plan of action. For each question, select the best answer of the choices given.

66. Vasquez-Morrell Assurance specializes in insuring manufacturers. Whenever a policyholder makes a claim, a claims adjuster determines the amount that Vasquez-Morrell is obligated to pay. Vasquez-Morrell is cutting its staff of claims adjusters by 15 percent. To ensure that the company's ability to handle claims promptly is affected as little as possible by the staff cuts, consultants recommend that Vasquez-Morrell lay off those adjusters who now take longest, on average, to complete work on claims assigned to them.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously calls into question the consultants' criterion for selecting the staff to be laid off?

- (A) If the time that Vasquez-Morrell takes to settle claims increases significantly, it could lose business to other insurers.
- (B) Supervisors at Vasquez-Morrell tend to assign the most complex claims to the most capable adjusters.
- (C) At Vasquez-Morrell, no insurance payments are made until a claims adjuster has reached a final determination on the claim.
- (D) There are no positions at Vasquez-Morrell to which staff currently employed as claims adjusters could be reassigned.
- (E) The premiums that Vasquez-Morrell currently charges are no higher than those charged for similar coverage by competitors.

67. Prolonged spells of hot, dry weather at the end of the grape-growing season typically reduce a vineyard's yield, because the grapes stay relatively small. In years with such weather, wine producers can make only a relatively small quantity of wine from a given area of vineyards. Nonetheless, in regions where wine producers generally grow their own grapes, analysts typically expect a long, hot, dry spell late in the growing season to result in increased revenues for local wine producers.

Which of the following, if true, does most to justify the analysts' expectation?

- (A) The lower a vineyard's yield, the less labor is required to harvest the grapes.
- (B) Long, hot, dry spells at the beginning of the grape-growing season are rare, but they can have a devastating effect on a vineyard's yield.
- (C) Grapes grown for wine production are typically made into wine at or near the vineyard in which they were grown.
- (D) When hot, dry spells are followed by heavy rains, the rains frequently destroy grape crops.
- (E) Grapes that have matured in hot, dry weather make significantly better wine than ordinary grapes.

68. In the past, most children who went sledding in the winter snow in Verland used wooden sleds with runners and steering bars. Ten years ago, smooth plastic sleds became popular; they go faster than wooden sleds but are harder to steer and slow. The concern that plastic sleds are more dangerous is clearly borne out by the fact that the number of children injured while sledding was much higher last winter than it was 10 years ago.

Which of the following, if true in Verland, most seriously undermines the force of the evidence cited?

- (A) A few children still use traditional wooden sleds.
 - (B) Very few children wear any kind of protective gear, such as helmets, while sledding.
 - (C) Plastic sleds can be used in a much wider variety of snow conditions than wooden sleds can.
 - (D) Most sledding injuries occur when a sled collides with a tree, a rock, or another sled.
 - (E) Because the traditional wooden sleds can carry more than one rider, an accident involving a wooden sled can result in several children being injured.
69. Metal rings recently excavated from seventh-century settlements in the western part of Mexico were made using the same metallurgical techniques as those used by Ecuadorian artisans before and during that period. These techniques are sufficiently complex to make their independent development in both areas unlikely. Since the people of these two areas were in cultural contact, archaeologists hypothesize that the metallurgical techniques used to make the rings found in Mexico were learned by Mexican artisans from Ecuadorian counterparts.

Which of the following would it be most useful to establish in order to evaluate the archaeologists' hypothesis?

- (A) Whether metal objects were traded from Ecuador to western Mexico during the seventh century
- (B) Whether travel between western Mexico and Ecuador in the seventh century would have been primarily by land or by sea
- (C) Whether artisans from western Mexico could have learned complex metallurgical techniques from their Ecuadorian counterparts without actually leaving western Mexico
- (D) Whether metal tools were used in the seventh-century settlements in western Mexico
- (E) Whether any of the techniques used in the manufacture of the metal rings found in western Mexico are still practiced among artisans in Ecuador today

70. Following several years of declining advertising sales, the *Greenville Times* reorganized its advertising sales force. Before reorganization, the sales force was organized geographically, with some sales representatives concentrating on city-center businesses and others concentrating on different outlying regions. The reorganization attempted to increase the sales representatives' knowledge of clients' businesses by having each sales representative deal with only one type of industry or of retailing. After the reorganization, revenue from advertising sales increased.

In assessing whether the improvement in advertising sales can properly be attributed to the reorganization, it would be most helpful to find out which of the following?

- (A) What proportion of the total revenue of the *Greenville Times* is generated by advertising sales?
- (B) Has the circulation of the *Greenville Times* increased substantially in the last two years?
- (C) Among all the types of industry and retailing that use the *Greenville Times* as an advertising vehicle, which type accounts for the largest proportion of the newspaper's advertising sales?
- (D) Do any clients of the sales representatives of the *Greenville Times* have a standing order with the *Times* for a fixed amount of advertising per month?
- (E) Among the advertisers in the *Greenville Times*, are there more types of retail business or more types of industrial business?

71. Motorists in a certain country frequently complain that traffic congestion is much worse now than it was 20 years ago. No real measure of how much traffic congestion there was 20 years ago exists, but the motorists' complaints are almost certainly unwarranted. The country's highway capacity has tripled in the last twenty years, thanks to a vigorous highway construction program, whereas the number of automobiles registered in the country has increased by only 75 percent.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

- (A) Most automobile travel is local, and the networks of roads and streets in the country's settled areas have changed little over the last 20 years.
 - (B) Gasoline prices are high, and miles traveled per car per year have not changed much over the last 20 years.
 - (C) The country's urban centers have well-developed public transit systems that carry most of the people who commute into those centers.
 - (D) The average age of automobiles registered in the country is lower now than it was 20 years ago.
 - (E) Radio stations have long been broadcasting regular traffic reports that inform motorists about traffic congestion.
72. The percentage of households with an annual income of more than \$40,000 is higher in Merton County than in any other county. However, the percentage of households with an annual income of \$60,000 or more is higher in Sommer County.

If the statements above are true, which of the following must also be true?

- (A) The percentage of households with an annual income of \$80,000 is higher in Sommer County than in Merton County.
- (B) Merton County has the second highest percentage of households with an annual income of \$60,000 or more.
- (C) Some households in Merton County have an annual income between \$40,000 and \$60,000.
- (D) The number of households with an annual income of more than \$40,000 is greater in Merton County than in Sommer County.
- (E) Average annual household income is higher in Sommer County than in Merton County.

73. Tiger beetles are such fast runners that they can capture virtually any nonflying insect. However, when running toward an insect, a tiger beetle will intermittently stop and then, a moment later, resume its attack. Perhaps the beetles cannot maintain their pace and must pause for a moment's rest; but an alternative hypothesis is that while running, tiger beetles are unable to adequately process the resulting rapidly changing visual information and so quickly go blind and stop.

Which of the following, if discovered in experiments using artificially moved prey insects, would support one of the two hypotheses and undermine the other?

- (A) When a prey insect is moved directly toward a beetle that has been chasing it, the beetle immediately stops and runs away without its usual intermittent stopping.
- (B) In pursuing a swerving insect, a beetle alters its course while running and its pauses become more frequent as the chase progresses.
- (C) In pursuing a moving insect, a beetle usually responds immediately to changes in the insect's direction, and it pauses equally frequently whether the chase is up or down an incline.
- (D) If, when a beetle pauses, it has not gained on the insect it is pursuing, the beetle generally ends its pursuit.
- (E) The faster a beetle pursues an insect fleeing directly away from it, the more frequently the beetle stops.

74. Guillemots are birds of Arctic regions. They feed on fish that gather beneath thin sheets of floating ice, and they nest on nearby land. Guillemots need 80 consecutive snow-free days in a year to raise their chicks, so until average temperatures in the Arctic began to rise recently, the guillemots' range was limited to the southernmost Arctic coast. Therefore, if the warming continues, the guillemots' range will probably be enlarged by being extended northward along the coast.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

- (A) Even if the warming trend continues, there will still be years in which guillemot chicks are killed by an unusually early snow.
 - (B) If the Arctic warming continues, guillemots' current predators are likely to succeed in extending their own range farther north.
 - (C) Guillemots nest in coastal areas, where temperatures are generally higher than in inland areas.
 - (D) If the Arctic warming continues, much of the thin ice in the southern Arctic will disappear.
 - (E) The fish that guillemots eat are currently preyed on by a wider variety of predators in the southernmost Arctic regions than they are farther north.
75. Some batches of polio vaccine used around 1960 were contaminated with SV40, a virus that in monkeys causes various cancers. Some researchers now claim that this contamination caused some cases of a certain cancer in humans, mesothelioma. This claim is not undercut by the fact that a very careful survey made in the 1960s of people who had received the contaminated vaccine found no elevated incidence of any cancer, since _____.
- (A) most cases of mesothelioma are caused by exposure to asbestos
 - (B) in some countries, there was no contamination of the vaccine
 - (C) SV40 is widely used in laboratories to produce cancers in animals
 - (D) mesotheliomas take several decades to develop
 - (E) mesothelioma was somewhat less common in 1960 than it is now

76. Gortland has long been narrowly self-sufficient in both grain and meat. However, as per capita income in Gortland has risen toward the world average, per capita consumption of meat has also risen toward the world average, and it takes several pounds of grain to produce one pound of meat. Therefore, since per capita income continues to rise, whereas domestic grain production will not increase, Gortland will soon have to import either grain or meat or both.

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

- (A) The total acreage devoted to grain production in Gortland will soon decrease.
- (B) Importing either grain or meat will not result in a significantly higher percentage of Gortlanders' incomes being spent on food than is currently the case.
- (C) The per capita consumption of meat in Gortland is increasing at roughly the same rate across all income levels.
- (D) The per capita income of meat producers in Gortland is rising faster than the per capita income of grain producers.
- (E) People in Gortland who increase their consumption of meat will not radically decrease their consumption of grain.

77. The Hazelton coal-processing plant is a major employer in the Hazelton area, but national environmental regulations will force it to close if it continues to use old, polluting processing methods. However, to update the plant to use newer, cleaner methods would be so expensive that the plant will close unless it receives the tax break it has requested. In order to prevent a major increase in local unemployment, the Hazelton government is considering granting the plant's request.

Which of the following would be most important for the Hazelton government to determine before deciding whether to grant the plant's request?

- (A) Whether the company that owns the plant would open a new plant in another area if the present plant were closed
- (B) Whether the plant would employ far fewer workers when updated than it does now
- (C) Whether the level of pollutants presently being emitted by the plant is high enough to constitute a health hazard for local residents
- (D) Whether the majority of the coal processed by the plant is sold outside the Hazelton area
- (E) Whether the plant would be able to process more coal when updated than it does now

78. A physically active lifestyle has been shown to help increase longevity. In the Wistar region of Bellaria, the average age at death is considerably higher than in any other part of the country. Wistar is the only mountainous part of Bellaria. A mountainous terrain makes even such basic activities as walking relatively strenuous; it essentially imposes a physically active lifestyle on people. Clearly, this circumstance explains the long lives of people in Wistar.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

- (A) In Bellaria all medical expenses are paid by the government, so that personal income does not affect the quality of health care a person receives.
- (B) The Wistar region is one of Bellaria's least populated regions.
- (C) Many people who live in the Wistar region have moved there in middle age or upon retirement.
- (D) The many opportunities for hiking, skiing, and other outdoor activities that Wistar's mountains offer make it a favorite destination for vacationing Bellarians.
- (E) Per capita spending on recreational activities is no higher in Wistar than it is in other regions of Bellaria.

79. Cheever College offers several online courses via remote computer connection, in addition to traditional classroom-based courses. A study of student performance at Cheever found that, overall, the average student grade for online courses matched that for classroom-based courses. In this calculation of the average grade, course withdrawals were weighted as equivalent to a course failure, and the rate of withdrawal was much lower for students enrolled in classroom-based courses than for students enrolled in online courses.

If the statements above are true, which of the following must also be true of Cheever College?

- (A) Among students who did not withdraw, students enrolled in online courses got higher grades, on average, than students enrolled in classroom-based courses.
- (B) The number of students enrolled per course at the start of the school term is much higher, on average, for the online courses than for the classroom-based courses.
- (C) There are no students who take both an online and a classroom-based course in the same school term.
- (D) Among Cheever College students with the best grades, a significant majority take online, rather than classroom-based, courses.
- (E) Courses offered online tend to deal with subject matter that is less challenging than that of classroom-based courses.

80. For years the beautiful Renaissance buildings in Palitito have been damaged by exhaust from the many tour buses that come to the city. There has been little parking space, so most buses have idled at the curb during each stop on their tour, and idling produces as much exhaust as driving. The city has now provided parking that accommodates a third of the tour buses, so damage to Palitito's buildings from the buses' exhaust will diminish significantly.

Which of the following, if true, most strongly supports the argument?

- (A) The exhaust from Palitito's few automobiles is not a significant threat to Palitito's buildings.
- (B) Palitito's Renaissance buildings are not threatened by pollution other than engine exhaust.
- (C) Tour buses typically spend less than one-quarter of the time they are in Palitito transporting passengers from one site to another.
- (D) More tourists come to Palitito by tour bus than by any other single means of transportation.
- (E) Some of the tour buses that are unable to find parking drive around Palitito while their passengers are visiting a site.

81. During the 1980s and 1990s, the annual number of people who visited the Sordellian Mountains increased continually, and many new ski resorts were built. Over the same period, however, the number of visitors to ski resorts who were caught in avalanches decreased, even though there was no reduction in the annual number of avalanches in the Sordellian Mountains.

Which of the following, if true in the Sordellian Mountains during the 1980s and 1990s, most helps to explain the decrease?

- (A) Avalanches were most likely to happen when a large new snowfall covered an older layer of snow.
- (B) Avalanches destroyed at least some buildings in the Sordellian Mountains in every year.
- (C) People planning new ski slopes and other resort facilities used increasingly accurate information about which locations are likely to be in the path of avalanches.
- (D) The average length of stay for people visiting the Sordellian Mountains increased slightly.
- (E) Construction of new ski resorts often led to the clearing of wooded areas that had helped to prevent avalanches.

82. A year ago, Dietz Foods launched a yearlong advertising campaign for its canned tuna. Last year Dietz sold 12 million cans of tuna compared to the 10 million sold during the previous year, an increase directly attributable to new customers brought in by the campaign. Profits from the additional sales, however, were substantially less than the cost of the advertising campaign. Clearly, therefore, the campaign did nothing to further Dietz's economic interests.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

- (A) Sales of canned tuna account for a relatively small percentage of Dietz Foods' profits.
- (B) Most of the people who bought Dietz's canned tuna for the first time as a result of the campaign were already loyal customers of other Dietz products.
- (C) A less expensive advertising campaign would have brought in significantly fewer new customers for Dietz's canned tuna than did the campaign Dietz Foods launched last year.
- (D) Dietz made money on sales of canned tuna last year.
- (E) In each of the past five years, there was a steep, industry-wide decline in sales of canned tuna.

Verbal Answer Keys

Verbal

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| 66. B | 78. C |
| 67. E | 79. A |
| 68. C | 80. C |
| 69. A | 81. C |
| 70. B | 82. E |
| 71. A | |
| 72. C | |
| 73. B | |
| 74. D | |
| 75. D | |
| 76. E | |
| 77. B | |