



# Main Conclusion

- **67 Questions (Arranged by Difficulty)**
- **From PrepTests 1-38**

## 2 • Main Conclusion

1. The term “pit bull” does not designate a breed of dog, as do the terms “German shepherd” and “poodle.” It is like the terms “Seeing-Eye dog” and “police dog,” which designate dogs according to what they do. If you take two German shepherds and place them side by side, you cannot tell by appearance alone which is the police dog and which is the Seeing-Eye dog.

Which one of the following is the main point of the passage?<sup>1</sup>

- (A) German shepherds can be pit bulls.
  - (B) Pit bulls can be distinguished from other kinds of dogs by appearance alone.
  - (C) A dog is a pit bull because of what it does, not because of its breed.
  - (D) German shepherds can function both as police dogs and as Seeing-Eye dogs.
  - (E) Some breeds of dogs cannot be distinguished from other breeds of dogs by appearance alone.
2. As symbols of the freedom of the wilderness, bald eagles have the unique capacity to inspire people and foster in them a sympathetic attitude toward the needs of other threatened species. Clearly, without that sympathy and the political will it engenders, the needs of more obscure species will go unmet. The conservation needs of many obscure species can only be met by beginning with the conservation of this symbolic species, the bald eagle.

Which one of the following is the main point of the passage as a whole?<sup>2</sup>

- (A) Because bald eagles symbolize freedom, conservation efforts should be concentrated on them rather than on other, more obscure species.
- (B) The conservation of bald eagles is the first necessary step in conserving other endangered species.
- (C) Without increased public sympathy for conservation, the needs of many symbolic species will go unmet.
- (D) People’s love of the wilderness can be used to engender political support for conservation efforts.
- (E) Other threatened species do not inspire people or foster sympathy as much as do bald eagles.

3. Some cleaning fluids, synthetic carpets, wall paneling, and other products release toxins, such as formaldehyde and benzene, into the household air supply. This is not a problem in well-ventilated houses, but it is a problem in houses that are so well insulated that they trap toxins as well as heat. Recent tests, however, demonstrate that houseplants remove some household toxins from the air and thereby eliminate their danger. In one test, 20 large plants eliminated formaldehyde from a small, well-insulated house.

The passage is structured to lead to which one of the following conclusions?<sup>3</sup>

- (A) Houseplants can remove benzene from the air.
  - (B) Nonsynthetic products do not release toxins into houses.
  - (C) Keeping houseplants is an effective means of trapping heat in a poorly insulated house.
  - (D) Keeping houseplants can compensate for some of the negative effects of poor ventilation.
  - (E) The air in a well-insulated house with houseplants will contain fewer toxins than the air in a well-ventilated house without houseplants.
4. The United States government generally tries to protect valuable natural resources. But one resource has been ignored for too long. In the United States, each bushel of corn produced might result in the loss of as much as two bushels of topsoil. Moreover, in the last 100 years, the topsoil in many states, which once was about fourteen inches thick, has been eroded to only six or eight inches. Nonetheless, federal expenditures for nationwide soil conservation programs have remained at ridiculously low levels. Total federal expenditures for nationwide soil conservation programs have been less than the allocations of some individual states.

Which one of the following best expresses the main point of the argument?<sup>4</sup>

- (A) Corn is not a cost-effective product and substitutes should be found where possible.
- (B) A layer of topsoil only six to eight inches thick cannot support the continued cultivation of corn.
- (C) Soil conservation is a responsibility of the federal government, not the states.
- (D) The federal government’s expenditures for soil conservation in the various states have been inequitable.
- (E) The federal government should spend much more on soil conservation than it has been spending.

<sup>1</sup> PT1-S3-Q13

<sup>2</sup> PT2-S2-Q6

<sup>3</sup> PT2-S4-Q19

<sup>4</sup> PT5-S3-Q3

5. A law that is not consistently enforced does not serve its purpose. Law without enforcement is not law; it is merely statute—a promise of law. To institute real law is not merely to declare that such and such behavior is forbidden; it is also to punish those who violate that edict. Furthermore, those who enforce law must punish without favor for their friends or malice for their enemies. To punish only those one dislikes while forgiving others is not to enforce law but to engage in the arbitrary and unjust exercise of power.

The main point of the passage is that instituting real law consists in<sup>5</sup>

- (A) the exercise of power
  - (B) authorizing the enforcement of punishments
  - (C) the unbiased punishment of prohibited behavior
  - (D) understanding the purpose of law
  - (E) clearly defining unacceptable behavior
6. There is no mystery as to why figurative painting revived in the late 1970s. People want to look at recognizable images. Sorting out art theories reflected in abstract paintings is no substitute for the sense of empathy that comes from looking at a realistic painting of a figure in a landscape. Perhaps members of the art-viewing public resented abstract art because they felt that its lack of realistic subject matter was a rejection of the viewers and their world.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?<sup>6</sup>

- (A) Abstract paintings often include shapes or forms that are suggestive of real objects or emotions.
- (B) The art-viewing public wished to see traditional subjects treated in a nontraditional manner.
- (C) Paintings that depict a recognizable physical world rather than the emotional world of the artist's life require more artistic talent to create.
- (D) The general public is unable to understand the theories on which abstract painting is based.
- (E) The artistic preferences of the art-viewing public stimulated the revival.

7. Arguing that there was no trade between Europe and East Asia in the early Middle Ages because there are no written records of such trade is like arguing that the yeti, an apelike creature supposedly existing in the Himalayas, does not exist because there have been no scientifically confirmed sightings. A verifiable sighting of the yeti would prove that the creature does exist, but the absence of sightings cannot prove that it does not.

Which one of the following best expresses the point of the argument?<sup>7</sup>

- (A) Evidence for the existence of trade between Europe and East Asia in the early Middle Ages is, like evidence for the existence of the yeti, not scientifically confirmed.
- (B) In order to prove that in the early Middle Ages there was trade between Europe and East Asia it is necessary to find both Asian and European evidence that such trade existed.
- (C) That trade between Europe and East Asia did not exist in the early Middle Ages cannot be established simply by the absence of a certain sort of evidence that this trade existed.
- (D) The view that there was trade between Europe and East Asia in the early Middle Ages can only be disproved by showing that no references to this trade exist in surviving records.
- (E) There is no more evidence that trade between Europe and East Asia existed in the early Middle Ages than there is that the yeti exists.

<sup>5</sup> PT6-S2-Q1

<sup>6</sup> PT6-S2-Q18

<sup>7</sup> PT6-S3-Q12

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8. Some legislators refuse to commit public funds for new scientific research if they cannot be assured that the research will contribute to the public welfare. Such a position ignores the lessons of experience. Many important contributions to the public welfare that resulted from scientific research were never predicted as potential outcomes of that research. Suppose that a scientist in the early twentieth century had applied for public funds to study molds: who would have predicted that such research would lead to the discovery of antibiotics—one of the greatest contributions ever made to the public welfare?

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?<sup>8</sup>

- (A) The committal of public funds for new scientific research will ensure that the public welfare will be enhanced.
- (B) If it were possible to predict the general outcome of a new scientific research effort, then legislators would not refuse to commit public funds for that effort.
- (C) Scientific discoveries that have contributed to the public welfare would have occurred sooner if public funds had been committed to the research that generated those discoveries.
- (D) In order to ensure that scientific research is directed toward contributing to the public welfare, legislators must commit public funds to new scientific research.
- (E) Lack of guarantees that new scientific research will contribute to the public welfare is not sufficient reason for legislators to refuse to commit public funds to new scientific research.

9. The fire that destroyed the Municipal Building started before dawn this morning, and the last fire fighters did not leave until late this afternoon. No one could have been anywhere in the vicinity of a fire like that one and fail to notice it. Thomas must have seen it, whatever he now says to the contrary. He admits that, as usual, he went from his apartment to the library this morning, and there is no way for him to get from his apartment to the library without going past the Municipal Building.

The main conclusion of the argument is that<sup>9</sup>

- (A) Thomas was in the vicinity of the fire this morning
- (B) Thomas claimed not to have seen the fire
- (C) Thomas saw the fire this morning
- (D) Thomas went directly from his apartment to the library this morning
- (E) Thomas went by the Municipal Building this morning

10. If the regulation of computer networks is to be modeled on past legislation, then its model must be either legislation regulating a telephone system or else legislation regulating a public broadcasting service. If the telephone model is used, computer networks will be held responsible only for ensuring that messages get transmitted. If the public broadcast model is used, computer networks will additionally be responsible for the content of those messages. Yet a computer network serves both these sorts of functions: it can serve as a private message service or as a publicly accessible information service. Thus neither of these models can be appropriate for computer networks.

The passage is structured to lead to which one of the following conclusions?<sup>10</sup>

- (A) Regulation of computer networks is required in order to ensure the privacy of the messages transmitted through such networks.
- (B) The regulation of computer networks should not be modeled on any single piece of past legislation.
- (C) Computer networks were developed by being modeled on both telephone systems and television networks.
- (D) Legislators who do not have extensive experience with computers should not attempt to write legislation regulating computer networks.
- (E) A computer network merely duplicates the functions of a telephone system and a television network.

11. That long-term cigarette smoking can lead to health problems including cancer and lung disease is a scientifically well-established fact. Contrary to what many people seem to believe, however, it is not necessary to deny this fact in order to reject the view that tobacco companies should be held either morally or legally responsible for the poor health of smokers. After all, excessive consumption of candy undeniably leads to such health problems as tooth decay, but no one seriously believes that candy eaters who get cavities should be able to sue candy manufacturers.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>11</sup>

- (A) no one should feel it necessary to deny the scientifically well-established fact that long-term cigarette smoking can lead to health problems
- (B) people who get cavities should not be able to sue candy manufacturers
- (C) the fact that smokers' health problems can be caused by their smoking is not enough to justify holding tobacco companies either legally or morally responsible for those problems
- (D) excessive consumption of candy will lead to health problems just as surely as long-term cigarette smoking will
- (E) if candy manufacturers were held responsible for tooth decay among candy eaters then tobacco companies should also be held responsible for health problems suffered by smokers

<sup>8</sup> PT7-S4-Q2

<sup>9</sup> PT10-S1-Q11

<sup>10</sup> PT11-S2-Q4

<sup>11</sup> PT11-S4-Q8

12. Kim: Some people claim that the battery-powered electric car represents a potential solution to the problem of air pollution. But they forget that it takes electricity to recharge batteries and that most of our electricity is generated by burning polluting fossil fuels. Increasing the number of electric cars on the road would require building more generating facilities since current facilities are operating at maximum capacity. So even if all of the gasoline-powered cars on the roads today were replaced by electric cars, it would at best be an exchange of one source of fossil-fuel pollution for another.

The main point made in Kim's argument is that<sup>12</sup>

- (A) replacing gasoline-powered cars with battery-powered electric cars will require building more generating facilities
  - (B) a significant reduction in air pollution cannot be achieved unless people drive less
  - (C) all forms of automobile transportation are equally harmful to the environment in terms of the air pollution they produce
  - (D) battery-powered electric cars are not a viable solution to the air-pollution problem
  - (E) gasoline-powered cars will probably remain a common means of transportation for the foreseeable future
13. A report on the likely effects of current levels of air pollution on forest growth in North America concluded that, since nitrogen is a necessary nutrient for optimal plant growth, the nitrogen deposited on forest soil as a result of air pollution probably benefits eastern forests. However, European soil scientists have found that in forests saturated with sulfate and nitrate, trees begin to die when the nitrogen deposited exceeds the amount of nitrogen absorbed by the forest system. Since this finding is likely to apply to forests everywhere, large areas of eastern forests of North America are, undoubtedly, already being affected adversely.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?<sup>13</sup>

- (A) The implication of the report cited is that the amount of nitrogen reaching eastern forests by way of polluted air is approximately what those forests need for optimal growth.
- (B) If large areas of eastern forests were increasingly saturated with sulfate and nitrate, the capacity of those forest systems for absorbing nitrogen would also increase.
- (C) The type of analysis used by European soil scientists does not necessarily apply to eastern forests of North America.
- (D) The eastern forests are the only forests of North America currently affected by polluted air.
- (E) Contrary to the report cited, the nitrogen pollution now in the air is more likely to cause trees to die in eastern forests than to benefit them.

14. Should a journalist's story begin with the set phrase "in a surprise development," as routinely happens? Well, not if the surprise was merely the journalist's, since journalists should not intrude themselves into their stories, and not if the surprise was someone else's, because if some person's surprise was worth mentioning at all, it should have been specifically attributed. The one possibility remaining is that lots of people were surprised; in that case, however, there is no point in belaboring the obvious.

Which one of the following most accurately states the conclusion of the argument above?<sup>14</sup>

- (A) Journalists should reserve use of the phrase "in a surprise development" for major developments that are truly unexpected.
  - (B) The phrase "in a surprise development" is appropriately used only where someone's being surprised is itself interesting.
  - (C) The phrase "in a surprise development" is used in three distinct sorts of circumstances.
  - (D) Journalists should make the point that a development comes as a surprise when summing up, not when introducing, a story.
  - (E) Introducing stories with the phrase "in a surprise development" is not good journalistic practice.
15. Those who support the continued reading and performance of Shakespeare's plays maintain that in England appreciation for his work has always extended beyond educated elites and that ever since Shakespeare's own time his plays have always been known and loved by comparatively uneducated people. Skepticism about this claim is borne out by examining early eighteenth-century editions of the plays. These books, with their fine paper and good bindings, must have been far beyond the reach of people of ordinary means.

The main point of the argument is to<sup>15</sup>

- (A) suggest that knowledge of Shakespeare's plays is a suitable criterion for distinguishing the educated elite from other members of English society
- (B) provide evidence that at some time in the past appreciation for Shakespeare's plays was confined to educated elites
- (C) prove that early eighteenth-century appreciation for Shakespeare's works rested on aspects of the works that are less appreciated today
- (D) demonstrate that since Shakespeare's time the people who have known and loved his work have all been members of educated elites
- (E) confirm the skepticism of the educated elite concerning the worth of Shakespeare's plays

<sup>12</sup> PT13-S4-Q3

<sup>13</sup> PT14-S2-Q19

<sup>14</sup> PT15-S2-Q11

<sup>15</sup> PT15-S3-Q1

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16. The frequently expressed view that written constitutions are inherently more liberal than unwritten ones is false. No written constitution is more than a paper with words on it until those words are both interpreted and applied. Properly understood, then, a constitution is the sum of those procedures through which the power of the state is legitimately exercised and limited. Therefore, even a written constitution becomes a liberal constitution only when it is interpreted and applied in a liberal way.

The main point of the argument above is that<sup>16</sup>

- (A) written constitutions are no more inherently liberal than are unwritten constitutions
- (B) the idea of a written constitution, properly understood, is inherently self-contradictory
- (C) unwritten constitutions are less subject to misinterpretation than are constitutions that have been written down
- (D) liberal constitutions are extremely difficult to preserve
- (E) there are criteria for evaluating the interpretation and application of a constitution

17. Most people are indignant at the suggestion that they are not reliable authorities about their real wants. Such self-knowledge, however, is not the easiest kind of knowledge to acquire. Indeed, acquiring it often requires hard and even potentially risky work. To avoid such effort, people unconsciously convince themselves that they want what society says they should want.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>17</sup>

- (A) acquiring self-knowledge can be risky
- (B) knowledge of what one really wants is not as desirable as it is usually thought to be
- (C) people cannot really want what they should want
- (D) people usually avoid making difficult decisions
- (E) people are not necessarily reliable authorities about what they really want

18. Zoo director: The city is in a financial crisis and must reduce its spending. Nevertheless, at least one reduction measure in next year's budget, cutting City Zoo's funding in half, is false economy. The zoo's current budget equals less than 1 percent of the city's deficit, so withdrawing support from the zoo does little to help the city's financial situation. Furthermore, the zoo, which must close if its budget is cut, attracts tourists and tax dollars to the city. Finally, the zoo adds immeasurably to the city's cultural climate and thus makes the city an attractive place for business to locate.

Which one of the following is the main conclusion of the zoo director's argument?<sup>18</sup>

- (A) Reducing spending is the only means the city has of responding to the current financial crisis.
- (B) It would be false economy for the city to cut the zoo's budget in half.
- (C) City Zoo's budget is only a very small portion of the city's entire budget.
- (D) The zoo will be forced to close if its budget is cut.
- (E) The city's educational and cultural climate will be irreparably damaged if the zoo is forced to close.

19. When politicians resort to personal attacks, many editorialists criticize these attacks but most voters pay them scant attention. Everyone knows such attacks will end after election day, and politicians can be excused for mudslinging. Political commentators, however, cannot be. Political commentators should be engaged in sustained and serious debate about ideas and policies. In such a context, personal attacks on opponents serve not to beat those opponents but to cut off the debate.

Which one of the following most accurately states the main point of the argument?<sup>19</sup>

- (A) Personal attacks on opponents serve a useful purpose for politicians.
- (B) Political commentators should not resort to personal attacks on their opponents.
- (C) Editorialists are right to criticize politicians who resort to personal attacks on their opponents.
- (D) The purpose of serious debate about ideas and policies is to counteract the effect of personal attacks by politicians.
- (E) Voters should be concerned about the personal attacks politicians make on each other.

<sup>16</sup> PT15-S3-Q4

<sup>17</sup> PT18-S2-Q10

<sup>18</sup> PT18-S4-Q2

<sup>19</sup> PT21-S2-Q1

20. In most corporations the salaries of executives are set by a group from the corporation's board of directors. Since the board's primary mission is to safeguard the economic health of the corporation rather than to make its executives rich, this way of setting executives' salaries is expected to prevent excessively large salaries. But, clearly, this expectation is based on poor reasoning. After all, most members of a corporation's board are themselves executives of some corporation and can expect to benefit from setting generous benchmarks for executives' salaries.

The point made by the author is that the most common way of setting executives' salaries might not keep those salaries in bounds because<sup>20</sup>

- (A) most corporate executives, thanks to their generous salaries, are not financially dependent on money earned as board members
- (B) most corporate executives might be less generous in setting their own salaries than the board members actually setting them are
- (C) many board members might let their self-interest as executives interfere with properly discharging their role, as board members, in setting executives' salaries
- (D) many board members who set executives' salaries unreasonably high do so because they happen to be on the board of a corporation of which they expect later to become executives
- (E) many board members are remunerated generously and wish to protect this source of income by pleasing the executives to whom they owe their appointments on the board

21. Most people who ride bicycles for pleasure do not ride until the warm weather of spring and summer arrives. Yet it is probably more effective to advertise bicycles earlier in the year. Most bicycles are purchased in the spring, but once shoppers are ready to shop for a bicycle, they usually have already decided which brand and model of bicycle they will purchase. By then it is generally too late to induce them to change their minds.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>21</sup>

- (A) bicycle advertisements are probably more effective if they appear before the arrival of warm spring weather
- (B) most bicycle purchasers decide on the brand and model of bicycle that they will buy before beginning to shop for a bicycle
- (C) more bicycles are purchased in the spring than at any other time of year
- (D) in general, once a bicycle purchaser has decided which bicycle he or she intends to purchase, it is difficult to bring about a change in that decision
- (E) spring and summer are the time of year in which bicycle riding as a leisure activity is most popular

22. The terms "sex" and "gender" are often used interchangeably. But "sex" more properly refers to biological differences of male and female, while "gender" refers to society's construction of a system that identifies what is masculine and feminine. Unlike the set of characteristics defining biological sex, the set of traits that are associated with gender does not sort people into two nonoverlapping groups. The traits characterize people in a complex way, so that a person may have both "masculine" and "feminine" traits.

Which one of the following statements best expresses a main point of the argument?<sup>22</sup>

- (A) Distinctions based on gender are frequently arbitrary.
- (B) Gender traits are not determined at birth.
- (C) Masculine gender traits are highly correlated with maleness.
- (D) The terms "sex" and "gender" are not properly interchangeable.
- (E) Society rather than the individual decides what is considered proper behavior.

23. The authors of a recent article examined warnings of an impending wave of extinctions of animal species within the next 100 years. These authors say that no evidence exists to support the idea that the rate of extinction of animal species is now accelerating. They are wrong, however. Consider only the data on fishes: 40 species and subspecies of North American fishes have vanished in the twentieth century, 13 between 1900 and 1950, and 27 since 1950.

Which one of the following is the main point of the argument?<sup>23</sup>

- (A) There is evidence that the rate of extinction of animal species is accelerating.
- (B) The future rate of extinction of animal species cannot be determined from available evidence.
- (C) The rate of extinction of North American fishes is parallel to the rate of extinction of all animal species taken together.
- (D) Forty species and subspecies of North American fishes have vanished in the twentieth century.
- (E) A substantial number of fish species are in danger of imminent extinction.

<sup>20</sup> PT21-S2-Q14

<sup>21</sup> PT21-S3-Q2

<sup>22</sup> PT21-S3-Q10

<sup>23</sup> PT24-S2-Q15

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24. Taxpayer: For the last ten years, Metro City's bridge-maintenance budget of \$1 million annually has been a prime example of fiscal irresponsibility. In a well-run bridge program, the city would spend \$15 million a year on maintenance, which would prevent severe deterioration, thus limiting capital expenses for needed bridge reconstruction to \$10 million. However, as a result of its attempt to economize, the city is now faced with spending \$400 million over two years on emergency reconstruction of its bridges.

The main point of the taxpayer's argument is that Metro City<sup>24</sup>

- (A) should have budgeted substantially more money for maintenance of its bridges
- (B) would have had a well-run bridge program if it had spent more money for reconstruction of its bridges
- (C) is spending more than it needs to on maintenance of its bridges
- (D) is economizing on its bridge program to save money in case of emergencies
- (E) has bridges that are more expensive to maintain than they were to build

25. It is well known that many species adapt to their environment, but it is usually assumed that only the most highly evolved species alter their environment in ways that aid their own survival. However, this characteristic is actually quite common. Certain species of plankton, for example, generate a gas that is converted in the atmosphere into particles of sulfate. These particles cause water vapor to condense, thus forming clouds. Indeed, the formation of clouds over the ocean largely depends on the presence of these particles. More cloud cover means more sunlight is reflected, and so the Earth absorbs less heat. Thus plankton cause the surface of the Earth to be cooler and this benefits the plankton.

Of the following, which one most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?<sup>25</sup>

- (A) The Earth would be far warmer than it is now if certain species of plankton became extinct.
- (B) By altering their environment in ways that improve their chances of survival, certain species of plankton benefit the Earth as a whole.
- (C) Improving their own chances of survival by altering the environment is not limited to the most highly evolved species.
- (D) The extent of the cloud cover over the oceans is largely determined by the quantity of plankton in those oceans.
- (E) Species such as plankton alter the environment in ways that are less detrimental to the well-being of other species than are the alterations to the environment made by more highly evolved species.

26. Some judges complain about statutes that specify mandatory minimum sentences for criminal offenses. These legal restrictions, they complain, are too mechanical and prevent judges from deciding when a given individual can or cannot be rehabilitated. But that is precisely why mandatory minimum sentences are necessary. History amply demonstrates that when people are free to use their own judgment they invariably believe themselves to act wisely when in fact they are often arbitrary and irrational. There is no reason to think that judges are an exception to this rule.

Which one of the following sentences most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?<sup>26</sup>

- (A) People believe that they have good judgment but never do.
- (B) Mandatory minimum sentences are too mechanical and reduce judicial discretion.
- (C) Judges should be free to exercise their own judgment.
- (D) Judges are often arbitrary and irrational.
- (E) Mandatory minimum sentences are needed to help prevent judicial arbitrariness.

27. The current theory about earthquakes holds that they are caused by adjoining plates of rock sliding past each other; the plates are pressed together until powerful forces overcome the resistance. As plausible as this may sound, at least one thing remains mysterious on this theory. The overcoming of such resistance should create enormous amounts of heat. But so far no increases in temperature unrelated to weather have been detected following earthquakes.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?<sup>27</sup>

- (A) No increases in temperature have been detected following earthquakes.
- (B) The current theory does not fully explain earthquake data.
- (C) No one will ever be sure what the true cause of earthquakes is.
- (D) Earthquakes produce enormous amounts of heat that have so far gone undetected.
- (E) Contrary to the current theory, earthquakes are not caused by adjoining plates of rock sliding past one another.

<sup>24</sup> PT25-S4-Q1

<sup>25</sup> PT29-S1-Q11

<sup>26</sup> PT29-S4-Q6

<sup>27</sup> PT30-S4-Q2

28. City council member: Despite the city's desperate need to exploit any available source of revenue, the mayor has repeatedly blocked council members' attempts to pass legislation imposing real estate development fees. It is clear that in doing so the mayor is sacrificing the city's interests to personal interests. The mayor cites figures to show that, in the current market, fees of the size proposed would significantly reduce the number of building starts and thus, on balance, result in a revenue loss to the city. But the important point is that the mayor's family is heavily involved in real estate development and thus has a strong financial interest in the matter.

Which one of the following most accurately and completely expresses the main conclusion of the city council member's argument?<sup>28</sup>

- (A) Imposing real estate development fees is the best way for the city to exploit the available sources of revenue.
- (B) The city would benefit financially from the passage of legislation imposing real estate development fees.
- (C) In blocking council members' attempts to impose real estate development fees, the mayor is sacrificing the city's interests to personal interests.
- (D) Significantly reducing the number of building starts would not, on balance, result in revenue loss to the city.
- (E) The mayor's family has a strong financial interest in preventing the passage of legislation that would impose real estate development fees.

29. A recent national study of the trash discarded in several representative areas confirmed that plastics constitute a smaller proportion of all trash than paper products do, whether the trash is measured by weight or by volume. The damage that a given weight or volume of trash does to the environment is roughly the same whether the trash consists of plastics or paper products. Contrary to popular opinion, therefore, the current use of plastics actually does less harm to the environment nationwide than that of paper products.

The main conclusion of the argument is that<sup>29</sup>

- (A) plastics constitute a smaller proportion of the nation's total trash than do paper products
- (B) the ratio of weight to volume is the same for plastic trash as it is for paper trash
- (C) popular opinion regards the use of paper products as less harmful to the environment than the use of products made from plastic
- (D) contrary to popular opinion, a shift away from the use of paper products to the use of plastics would benefit the environment nationwide
- (E) at this time more harm is being done to the environment nationwide by the use of paper than by the use of plastics

30. More women than men suffer from Alzheimer's disease—a disease that is most commonly contracted by elderly persons. This discrepancy has often been attributed to women's longer life span, but this theory may be wrong. A recent study has shown that prescribing estrogen to women after menopause, when estrogen production in the body decreases, may prevent them from developing the disease. Men's supply of testosterone may help safeguard them against Alzheimer's disease because much of it is converted by the body to estrogen, and testosterone levels stay relatively stable into old age.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument?<sup>30</sup>

- (A) A decrease in estrogen, rather than longer life span, may explain the higher occurrence of Alzheimer's disease in women relative to men.
- (B) As one gets older, one's chances of developing Alzheimer's disease increase.
- (C) Women who go through menopause earlier in life than do most other women have an increased risk of contracting Alzheimer's disease.
- (D) The conversion of testosterone into estrogen may help safeguard men from Alzheimer's disease.
- (E) Testosterone is necessary for preventing Alzheimer's disease in older men.

31. Moralists: Humans have a natural disposition to altruism—that is, to behavior that serves the needs of others regardless of one's own needs—but that very disposition prevents some acts of altruism from counting as moral. Reason plays an essential role in any moral behavior. Only behavior that is intended to be in accordance with a formal set of rules, or moral code, can be considered moral behavior.

Which one of the following most accurately states the main conclusion of the moralist's argument?<sup>31</sup>

- (A) All moral codes prohibit selfishness.
- (B) All moral behavior is motivated by altruism.
- (C) Behavior must serve the needs of others in order to be moral behavior.
- (D) Not all altruistic acts are moral behavior.
- (E) Altruism develops through the use of reason.

<sup>28</sup> PT32-S1-Q13

<sup>29</sup> PT33-S1-Q5

<sup>30</sup> PT35-S1-Q3

<sup>31</sup> PT35-S4-Q9

## 10 • Main Conclusion

32. It is widely believed that eating chocolate can cause acne. Indeed, many people who are susceptible to acne report that, in their own experience, eating large amounts of chocolate is invariably followed by an outbreak of that skin condition. However, it is likely that common wisdom has mistaken an effect for a cause. Several recent scientific studies indicate that hormonal changes associated with stress can cause acne and there is good evidence that people who are fond of chocolate tend to eat more chocolate when they are under stress.

Of the following, which one most accurately expresses the main point of the argument?<sup>32</sup>

- (A) People are mistaken who insist that whenever they eat large amounts of chocolate they invariably suffer from an outbreak of acne.
- (B) The more chocolate a person eats, the more likely that person is to experience the hormonal changes associated with stress.
- (C) Eating large amounts of chocolate is more likely to cause stress than it is to cause outbreaks of acne.
- (D) It is less likely that eating large amounts of chocolate causes acne than that both the chocolate eating and the acne are caused by stress.
- (E) The more stress a person experiences, the more likely that person is to crave chocolate.

33. Last month OCF, Inc., announced what it described as a unique new product: an adjustable computer workstation. Three days later ErgoTech unveiled an almost identical product. The two companies claim that the similarities are coincidental and occurred because the designers independently reached the same solution to the same problem. The similarities are too fundamental to be mere coincidence, however. The two products not only look alike, but they also work alike. Both are oddly shaped with identically placed control panels with the same types of controls. Both allow the same types of adjustments and the same types of optional enhancements.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>33</sup>

- (A) the two products have many characteristics in common
- (B) ErgoTech must have copied the design of its new product from OCF's design
- (C) the similarities between the two products are not coincidental
- (D) product designers sometimes reach the same solution to a given problem without consulting each other
- (E) new products that at first appear to be unique are sometimes simply variations of other products

34. Journalist: Obviously, though some animals are purely carnivorous, none would survive without plants. But the dependence is mutual. Many plant species would never have come to be had there been no animals to pollinate, fertilize, and broadcast their seeds. Also, plants' photosynthetic activity would deplete the carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere were it not constantly being replenished by the exhalation of animals, engine fumes, and smoke from fires, many set by human beings.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the journalist's argument?<sup>34</sup>

- (A) The photosynthetic activity of plants is necessary for animal life, but animal life is also necessary for the occurrence of photosynthesis in plants.
- (B) Some purely carnivorous animals would not survive without plants.
- (C) The chemical composition of Earth and its atmosphere depends, at least to some extent, on the existence and activities of the animals that populate Earth.
- (D) Human activity is part of what prevents plants from depleting the oxygen in Earth's atmosphere on which plants and animals alike depend.
- (E) Just as animals are dependent on plants for their survival, plants are dependent on animals for theirs.

35. Environmentalist: The complex ecosystem of the North American prairie has largely been destroyed to produce cattle feed. But the prairie ecosystem once supported 30 to 70 million bison, whereas North American agriculture now supports about 50 million cattle. Since bison yield as much meat as cattle, and the natural prairie required neither pesticides, machinery, nor government subsidies, returning as much land as possible to an uncultivated state could restore biodiversity without a major decrease in meat production.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the environmentalist's main conclusion?<sup>35</sup>

- (A) If earlier North American agricultural techniques were reintroduced, meat production would decrease only slightly.
- (B) Protecting the habitat of wild animals so that we can utilize these animals as a food source is more cost effective than raising domesticated animals.
- (C) The biodiversity of the North American prairie ecosystem should not be restored if doing so will have intolerable economic consequences.
- (D) Preservation of the remaining North American bison would be a sensible policy.
- (E) The devastation of the North American prairie ecosystem could be largely reversed without significantly decreasing meat production.

<sup>32</sup> PT36-S1-Q6

<sup>33</sup> PT38-S1-Q2

<sup>34</sup> PT38-S4-Q3

<sup>35</sup> PT38-S4-Q11

36. Can any research be found to validate the contention that those who spend time plucking out their gray hairs have more negative attitudes toward the elderly than those who shrug their shoulders about their gray hairs? Unless a person's psychopathology leads him or her to overgeneralize, there is no necessary connection. Certainly it is reasonable to like the elderly yet dislike the idea of impaired eyesight and hearing. Furthermore, holding negative attitudes toward older people merely because they are old is immoral, according to nearly universally accepted ethical standards. But there is nothing immoral about disliking some concomitants of the aging process.

Which one of the following best expresses the main point of the passage?<sup>36</sup>

- (A) It cannot be assumed that people who dislike some of the physical concomitants of growing old necessarily have negative feelings toward the elderly.
- (B) To dislike some of the physical concomitants of growing old is reasonable, while to dislike the elderly is immoral.
- (C) Since no one likes the physical concomitants of growing old, it is wrong to dislike the elderly merely because of their physical characteristics.
- (D) Being elderly is fine, but the process of becoming elderly is not; and people need to understand this distinction between the two.
- (E) To dislike the elderly is immoral, and to do so just because one dislikes some of the physical concomitants of growing old is unreasonable.

37. Like a number of other articles, Ian Ragnall's article relied on a recent survey in which over half the couples applying for divorces listed "money" as a major problem in their marriages. Ragnall's conclusion from the survey data is that financial problems are the major problem in marriages and an important factor contributing to the high divorce rate. Yet couples often express other types of marital frustrations in financial terms. Despite appearances, the survey data do not establish that financial problems are the major problem in contemporary marriages.

Which one of the following sentences best expresses the main point of the passage?<sup>37</sup>

- (A) Financial problems are not an important factor contributing to the divorce rate.
- (B) Marital problems are more easily solved by marriage counselors than by married couples on their own.
- (C) The conclusion drawn in Ragnall's article is inadequately justified.
- (D) Over half the couples applying for divorces listed money as a major problem in their marriages.
- (E) Many articles wrongly claim that financial problems are the major factor contributing to the divorce rate.

38. Balance is particularly important when reporting the background of civil wars and conflicts. Facts must not be deliberately manipulated to show one party in a favorable light, and the views of each side should be fairly represented. This concept of balance, however, does not justify concealing or glossing over basic injustices in an effort to be even-handed. If all the media were to adopt such a perverse interpretation of balanced reporting, the public would be given a picture of a world where each party in every conflict had an equal measure of justice on its side, contrary to our experience of life and, indeed, our common sense.

Which one of the following best expresses the main point of the argument?<sup>38</sup>

- (A) Balanced reporting presents the public with a picture of the world in which all sides to a conflict have equal justification.
- (B) Balanced reporting requires impartially revealing injustices where they occur no less than fairly presenting the views of each party in a conflict.
- (C) Our experience of life shows that there are indeed cases in which conflicts arise because of an injustice, with one party clearly in the wrong.
- (D) Common sense tells us that balance is especially needed when reporting the background of civil wars and conflicts.
- (E) Balanced reporting is an ideal that cannot be realized, because judgments of balance are necessarily subjective.

39. A recent report on an environmental improvement program was criticized for focusing solely on pragmatic solutions to the large number of significant problems that plague the program instead of seriously trying to produce a coherent vision for the future of the program. In response the report's authors granted that the critics had raised a valid point but explained that, to do anything at all, the program needed continued government funding, and that to get such funding the program first needed to regain a reputation for competence.

The basic position taken by the report's authors on the criticism leveled against the report is that<sup>39</sup>

- (A) addressing the critics' concern now would be premature
- (B) the critics' motives are self-serving
- (C) the notion of a coherent vision would be inappropriate to a program of the sort at issue
- (D) the authors of the report are more knowledgeable than its critics
- (E) giving the report a single focus is less desirable than the critics claim

<sup>36</sup> PT1-S4-Q19

<sup>37</sup> PT3-S2-Q18

<sup>38</sup> PT9-S2-Q3

<sup>39</sup> PT11-S2-Q20

## 12 • Main Conclusion

40. It is probably within the reach of human technology to make the climate of Mars inhabitable. It might be several centuries before people could live there, even with breathing apparatuses, but some of the world's great temples and cathedrals took centuries to build. Research efforts now are justified if there is even a chance of making another planet inhabitable. Besides, the intellectual exercise of understanding how the Martian atmosphere might be changed could help in understanding atmospheric changes inadvertently triggered by human activity on Earth.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>40</sup>

- (A) it is probably technologically possible for humankind to alter the climate of Mars
- (B) it would take several centuries to make Mars even marginally inhabitable
- (C) making Mars inhabitable is an effort comparable to building a great temple or cathedral
- (D) research efforts aimed at discovering how to change the climate of Mars are justified
- (E) efforts to change the climate of Mars could facilitate understanding of the Earth's climate

41. Since multinational grain companies operate so as to maximize profits, they cannot be relied on to initiate economic changes that would reform the world's food-distribution system. Although it is true that the actions of multinational companies sometimes do result in such economic change, this result is incidental, arising not from the desire for reform but from the desire to maximize profits. The maximization of profits normally depends on a stable economic environment, one that discourages change.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>41</sup>

- (A) the maximization of profits depends on a stable economic environment
- (B) when economic change accompanies business activity, that change is initiated by concern for the profit motive
- (C) multinational grain companies operate so as to maximize profits
- (D) the world's current food-distribution system is not in need of reform
- (E) multinational grain companies cannot be relied on to initiate reform of the world's food-distribution system

42. Household indebtedness, which some theorists regard as causing recession, was high preceding the recent recession, but so was the value of assets owned by households. Admittedly, if most of the assets were owned by quite affluent households, and most of the debt was owed by low-income households, high household debt levels could have been the cause of the recession despite high asset values: low-income households might have decreased spending in order to pay off debts while the quite affluent ones might simply have failed to increase spending. But, in fact, quite affluent people must have owed most of the household debt, since money is not lent to those without assets. Therefore, the real cause must lie elsewhere.

The argument is structured to lead to which one of the following conclusions?<sup>42</sup>

- (A) High levels of household debt did not cause the recent recession.
- (B) Low-income households succeeded in paying off their debts despite the recent recession.
- (C) Affluent people probably increased their spending levels during the recent recession.
- (D) High levels of household debt have little impact on the economy.
- (E) When people borrowed money prior to the recent recession, they did not use it to purchase assets.

43. Zachary: One would have to be blind to the reality of moral obligation to deny that people who believe a course of action to be morally obligatory for them have both the right and the duty to pursue that action, and that no one else has any right to stop them from doing so.

Cynthia: But imagine an artist who feels morally obliged to do whatever she can to prevent works of art from being destroyed confronting a morally committed antipornography demonstrator engaged in destroying artworks he deems pornographic. According to your principle that artist has, simultaneously, both the right and the duty to stop the destruction and no right whatsoever to stop it.

Cynthia's response to Zachary's claim is structured to demonstrate that<sup>43</sup>

- (A) the concept of moral obligation is incoherent
- (B) the ideas of right and duty should not be taken seriously since doing so leads to morally undesirable consequences
- (C) Zachary's principle is untenable on its own terms
- (D) because the term "moral obligation" is understood differently by different people, it is impossible to find a principle concerning moral rights and duties that applies to everyone
- (E) Zachary's principle is based on an understanding of moral obligation that is too narrow to encompass the kind of moral obligation artists feel toward works of art

<sup>40</sup> PT12-S1-Q1

<sup>41</sup> PT12-S1-Q9

<sup>42</sup> PT12-S4-Q10

<sup>43</sup> PT14-S2-Q14

44. Engineer: Some people argue that the world's energy problems could be solved by mining the Moon for helium-3, which could be used for fuel in fusion reactors. But this is nonsense. Even if it were possible to mine the Moon for helium-3, the technology needed to build viable fusion reactors that could use such fuel is at least 50 years away. If the world's energy problems are not solved before then, it will be too late to solve those problems.

The main point of the argument is that<sup>44</sup>

- (A) mining the Moon for helium-3 is currently not feasible
- (B) fusion reactors that are now being planned are not designed to use helium-3 as fuel
- (C) people who advocate mining the Moon for helium-3 do not realize that fusion reactors could be designed to use fuels other than helium-3
- (D) mining the Moon for helium-3 is not a possible solution to the world's energy problems
- (E) if the world's energy problems are not solved within the next 50 years, it will be too late to solve those problems

45. Dillworth: More and more people are deciding not to have children because of the personal and economic sacrifices children require and because so often children are ungrateful for the considerable sacrifices their parents do make for them. However, such considerations have no bearing on the fact that their children provide the best chance most people have of ensuring that their values live on after them. Therefore, for anyone with deeply held values, foregoing parenthood out of reluctance to make sacrifices for which little gratitude can be expected would probably be a mistake.

Travers: Your reasoning ignores another fact that deserves consideration: children's ingratitude for parental sacrifices usually stems from a wholesale rejection of parental values.

The point of Travers' rejoinder to Dillworth's argument is that<sup>45</sup>

- (A) Dillworth's assumption that children acquire values only from their parents is mistaken
- (B) it is a mistake to dismiss as irrelevant the personal and economic sacrifices people are called on to make for the sake of their children
- (C) Dillworth has overlooked the well-known fact that people with deeply held values not infrequently reject opposing values that are deeply held by others
- (D) the desire to perpetuate their values should not be a factor in people's decision to have children
- (E) the fact that children are often ungrateful for parental sacrifices is not irrelevant to deciding whether to have children in order to perpetuate one's values

46. Veterinarian: A disease of purebred racehorses that is caused by a genetic defect prevents afflicted horses from racing and can cause paralysis and death. Some horse breeders conclude that because the disease can have such serious consequences, horses with this defect should not be bred. But they are wrong because, in most cases, the severity of the disease can be controlled by diet and medication, and the defect also produces horses of extreme beauty that are in great demand in the horse show industry.

The point of the veterinarian's response to the horse breeders is most accurately expressed by which one of the following?<sup>46</sup>

- (A) Racehorses that have the genetic defect need not be prevented from racing.
- (B) There should not be an absolute ban on breeding racehorses that have the genetic defect.
- (C) Racehorses that are severely afflicted with the disease have not been provided with the proper diet.
- (D) The best way to produce racehorses of extreme beauty is to breed horses that have the genetic defect.
- (E) There should be no prohibition against breeding racehorses that have any disease that can be controlled by diet and exercise.

47. For years scientists have been scanning the skies in the hope of finding life on other planets. But in spite of the ever-increasing sophistication of the equipment they employ, some of it costing hundreds of millions of dollars, not the first shred of evidence of such life has been forthcoming. And there is no reason to think that these scientists will be any more successful in the future, no matter how much money is invested in the search. The dream of finding extraterrestrial life is destined to remain a dream, as science's experience up to this point should indicate.

Which one of the following most accurately states the main point of the argument?<sup>47</sup>

- (A) There is no reason to believe that life exists on other planets.
- (B) The equipment that scientists employ is not as sophisticated as it should be.
- (C) Scientists searching for extraterrestrial life will not find it.
- (D) Only if scientists had already found evidence of life on other planets would continued search be justified.
- (E) We should not spend money on sophisticated equipment to aid in the search for extraterrestrial life.

<sup>44</sup> PT17-S2-Q6

<sup>45</sup> PT17-S2-Q19

<sup>46</sup> PT23-S2-Q2

<sup>47</sup> PT24-S2-Q12

## 14 • Main Conclusion

48. Psychiatrist: We are learning that neurochemical imbalances can cause behavior ranging from extreme mental illness to less serious but irritating behavior such as obsessive fantasizing, petulance, or embarrassment. These findings will promote compassion and tolerance when looking at a mental illness, quirk, or mere difference between two persons, since being mentally healthy can now begin to be seen as simply having the same neurochemical balances as most people.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion of the psychiatrist's argument?<sup>48</sup>

- (A) Understanding the role of the neurochemical in behavior will foster empathy toward others.
- (B) Neurochemical imbalances can cause mental illness and other behaviors.
- (C) Neurochemical balances and imbalances are the main determinants of mental behavior.
- (D) Being mentally healthy is a matter of having the same neurochemical balances as most people.
- (E) Advances in neurochemistry enhance our theories of mental illness.

49. Generations of European-history students have been taught that a political assassination caused the First World War. Without some qualification, however, this teaching is bound to mislead, since the war would not have happened without the treaties and alliances that were already in effect and the military force that was already amassed. These were the deeper causes of the war, whereas the assassination was a cause only in a trivial sense. It was like the individual spark that happens to ignite a conflagration that was, in the prevailing conditions, inevitable.

Which one of the following most accurately restates the main point of the passage?<sup>49</sup>

- (A) The assassination did not cause the war, since the assassination was only the last in a chain of events leading up to the war, each of which had equal claim to being called its "cause."
- (B) The war was destined to happen, since the course of history up to that point could not have been altered.
- (C) Though the statement that the assassination caused the war is true, the term "cause" more fundamentally applies to the conditions that made it possible for that event to start the war.
- (D) If the assassination had occurred when it did but less military force had at that time been amassed, then the war's outbreak might have been considerably delayed or the war might not have occurred at all.
- (E) Although the conditions prevailing at the time the war started made war inevitable, if the war had not been triggered by the assassination it would not have taken the course with which students of history are familiar.

50. Sociologist: The welfare state cannot be successfully implemented because it rests on the assumption that human beings are unselfish—a seemingly false assumption. The welfare state is feasible only if wage earners are prepared to have their hard-earned funds used to help others in greater need, and that requires an unselfish attitude. But people innately seek their own well-being, especially when the interests of others threaten it.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the sociologist's argument?<sup>50</sup>

- (A) The welfare state will not work.
- (B) The welfare state unfairly asks those who work hard to help those in greater need.
- (C) The assumption that human beings are unselfish is false.
- (D) The interests of the less fortunate impinge on the interests of others.
- (E) The welfare state relies on the generosity of wage earners.

51. Doctor: The practice of using this therapy to treat the illness cannot be adequately supported by the claim that any therapy for treating the illness is more effective than no therapy at all. What must also be taken into account is that this therapy is expensive and complicated.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the doctor's argument?<sup>51</sup>

- (A) The therapy is more effective than no treatment at all for the illness.
- (B) The therapy is more effective than other forms of treatment for the illness.
- (C) The therapy is more expensive and complicated than other forms of treatment for the illness.
- (D) The therapy should not be used to treat the illness unless it is either effective or inexpensive.
- (E) The therapy's possible effectiveness in treating the illness is not sufficient justification for using it.

<sup>48</sup> PT25-S2-Q1

<sup>49</sup> PT25-S2-Q7

<sup>50</sup> PT26-S2-Q8

<sup>51</sup> PT31-S2-Q4

52. Ethicist: Both ASA and TPA are clot-dissolving agents. Recent studies show that the more expensive agent, TPA, would save at most two more lives than would ASA out of every 50 cardiac patients to whom they are postoperatively administered. However, since the relatives of the patients who die simply because they were given the less expensive medicine would be particularly grieved, the financial saving involved in using ASA over TPA must also be weighed against such considerations.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion of the ethicist's argument?<sup>52</sup>

- (A) ASA should never be given to postoperative cardiac patients in place of TPA.
- (B) TPA is a slightly more effective clot-dissolving agent than ASA.
- (C) The extra expense of TPA cannot be weighed simply against the few additional lives saved.
- (D) ASA is a less expensive clot-dissolving agent than TPA.
- (E) Relatives of a patient who has died grieve more if the patient received ASA rather than TPA.

53. Surrealist: Many artists mistakenly think that models need be taken only from outside the psyche. Although human sensibility can confer beauty upon even the most vulgar external objects, using the power of artistic representation solely to preserve and reinforce objects that would exist even without artists is an ironic waste.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion of the surrealist's argument?<sup>53</sup>

- (A) An artist's work should not merely represent objects from outside the psyche.
- (B) Artistic representation is used solely to preserve and reinforce objects.
- (C) Artists should not base all their work on mere representation.
- (D) Great art can confer beauty even upon very vulgar external objects.
- (E) True works of art rarely represent objects from outside the psyche.

54. On the basis of the available evidence, Antarctica has generally been thought to have been covered by ice for at least the past 14 million years. Recently, however, three-million-year-old fossils of a kind previously found only in ocean-floor sediments were discovered under the ice sheet covering central Antarctica. About three million years ago, therefore, the Antarctic ice sheet must temporarily have melted. After all, either severe climatic warming or volcanic activity in Antarctica's mountains could have melted the ice sheet, thus raising sea levels and submerging the continent.

Which one of the following is the main conclusion of the argument?<sup>54</sup>

- (A) Antarctica is no longer generally thought to have been covered by ice for the past 14 million years.
- (B) It is not the case that ancient fossils of the kind recently found in Antarctica are found only in ocean-floor sediments.
- (C) The ice sheet covering Antarctica has not been continuously present throughout the past 14 million years.
- (D) What caused Antarctica to be submerged under the sea was the melting of the ice sheet that had previously covered the continent.
- (E) The ice sheet covering Antarctica was melted either as a result of volcanic activity in Antarctica's mountains or as a result of severe climatic warming.

55. Muscular strength is a limited resource, and athletic techniques help to use this resource efficiently. Since top athletes do not differ greatly from each other in muscular strength, it follows that a requirement for an athlete to become a champion is a superior mastery of athletic techniques.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion of the argument?<sup>55</sup>

- (A) Only champion athletes have a superior mastery of athletic techniques.
- (B) Superior muscular strength is a requirement for an athlete to become a champion.
- (C) No athlete can become a champion without a superior mastery of athletic techniques.
- (D) The differences in muscular strength between top athletes are not great.
- (E) Athletic techniques help athletes use limited resources efficiently.

<sup>52</sup> PT31-S3-Q14

<sup>53</sup> PT32-S4-Q12

<sup>54</sup> PT35-S1-Q16

<sup>55</sup> PT36-S3-Q3

## 16 • Main Conclusion

56. I agree that Hogan's actions resulted in grievous injury to Winters. And I do not deny that Hogan fully realized the nature of his actions and the effects that they would have. Indeed, I would not disagree if you pointed out that intentionally causing such effects is reprehensible, other things being equal. But in asking you to concur with me that Hogan's actions not be wholly condemned I emphasize again that Hogan mistakenly believed Winters to be the robber who had been terrorizing west-side apartment buildings for the past several months.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the conclusion of the argument?<sup>56</sup>

- (A) Hogan should not be considered responsible for the injuries sustained by Winters.
- (B) The robber who had been terrorizing west-side apartment buildings should be considered to be as responsible for Winters's injuries as Hogan.
- (C) The actions of Hogan that seriously injured Winters are not completely blameworthy.
- (D) Hogan thought that Winters was the person who had been terrorizing west-side apartment buildings for the last few months.
- (E) The actions of Hogan that seriously injured Winters were reprehensible, other things being equal.

57. A newspaper article on Britain's unions argued that their strength was declining. The article's evidence was the decreasing number and size of strikes, as if the reason for the unions' existence was to organize strikes. Surely, in a modern industrial society, the calling of a strike is evidence that the negotiating position of the union was too weak. Strong unions do not need to call strikes. They can concentrate their efforts on working with others in the labor market to achieve common goals, such as profitable and humane working conditions.

The argument criticizing the newspaper article is directed toward establishing which one of the following as its main conclusion?<sup>57</sup>

- (A) The negotiating position of a union is weak if the only means it has of achieving its end is a strike or the threat of a strike.
- (B) Although unions represent the interests of their members, that does not preclude them from having interests in common with other participants in the labor market.
- (C) There is no reason to believe, on the basis of what the newspaper article said, that union strength in Britain is declining.
- (D) The reason for unions' existence is to work for goals such as profitable and humane working conditions by organizing strikes.
- (E) With strong unions it is possible for a modern industrial society to achieve profitable and humane working conditions, but without them it would be impossible.

58. Marcus: For most ethical dilemmas the journalist is likely to face, traditional journalistic ethics is clear, adequate, and essentially correct. For example, when journalists have uncovered newsworthy information, they should go to press with it as soon as possible. No delay motivated by the journalists' personal or professional interests is permissible.

Anita: Well, Marcus, of course interesting and important information should be brought before the public—that is a journalist's job. But in the typical case, where a journalist has some information but is in a quandary about whether it is yet important or "newsworthy," this guidance is inadequate.

The point made by Anita's statements is most accurately expressed by which one of the following?<sup>58</sup>

- (A) Marcus' claim that traditional journalistic ethics is clear for most ethical dilemmas in journalism is incorrect.
- (B) A typical case illustrates that Marcus is wrong in claiming that traditional journalistic ethics is essentially correct for most ethical dilemmas in journalism.
- (C) The ethical principle that Marcus cites does not help the journalist in a typical kind of situation in which a decision needs to be made.
- (D) There are common situations in which a journalist must make a decision and in which no principle of journalistic ethics can be of help.
- (E) Traditional journalistic ethics amounts to no more than an unnecessarily convoluted description of the journalist's job.

59. Would it be right for the government to abandon efforts to determine at what levels to allow toxic substances in our food supply? Only if it can reasonably be argued that the only acceptable level of toxic substances in food is zero. However, virtually all foods contain perfectly natural substances that are toxic but cause no harm because they do not occur in food in toxic concentrations. Furthermore, we can never be certain of having reduced the concentration of any substance to zero; all we can ever know is that it has been reduced to below the threshold of detection of current analytical methods.

The main conclusion of the argument is that<sup>59</sup>

- (A) the government should continue trying to determine acceptable levels for toxic substances in our food supply
- (B) the only acceptable level of toxic substances in food is zero
- (C) naturally occurring toxic substances in food present little danger because they rarely occur in toxic concentrations
- (D) the government will never be able to determine with certainty that a food contains no toxic substances
- (E) the government needs to refine its methods of detecting toxic substances in our food supply

<sup>56</sup> PT36-S3-Q9

<sup>57</sup> PT36-S3-Q23

<sup>58</sup> PT9-S4-Q18

<sup>59</sup> PT15-S2-Q8

60. Mayor of Outerville, a suburb of Center City: Outerville must grow if it is to survive, so, as we have agreed, efforts should be made to attract more residents. The best strategy for attracting residents is to renovate the train station. The numbers of jobs in Center City and of people who prefer to live in suburban towns are increasing. With the rise in tolls, driving into the city is becoming more expensive than train travel. Therefore, people want to live in towns where train travel is convenient and pleasant.

The argument leads to the conclusion that<sup>60</sup>

- (A) the town of Outerville should attract more residents
- (B) the train station in Outerville should be renovated
- (C) residents of Outerville who are in need of work should look for jobs in Center City
- (D) people who work in Center City but live in Outerville should commute by train rather than driving
- (E) people who want to live where train travel is convenient and pleasant should live in Outerville

61. Essayist: The way science is conducted and regulated can be changed. But we need to determine whether the changes are warranted, taking into account their price. The use of animals in research could end immediately, but only at the cost of abandoning many kinds of research and making others very expensive. The use of recombinant DNA could be drastically curtailed. Many other restrictions could be imposed, complete with a system of fraud police. But such massive interventions would be costly and would change the character of science.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the essayist's argument?<sup>61</sup>

- (A) We should not make changes that will alter the character of science.
- (B) If we regulate science more closely, we will change the character of science.
- (C) The regulation of science and the conducting of science can be changed.
- (D) The imposition of restrictions on the conduct of science would be very costly.
- (E) We need to be aware of the impact of change in science before changes are made.

62. Camera manufacturers typically advertise their products by citing the resolution of their cameras' lenses, the resolution of a lens being the degree of detail the lens is capable of reproducing in the image it projects onto the film. Differences between cameras in this respect are irrelevant for practical photography, however, since all modern lenses are so excellent that they project far more detail onto the film than any photographic film is capable of reproducing in a developed image.

Which one of the following most accurately states the main point of the argument?<sup>62</sup>

- (A) Camera manufacturers ought to concentrate on building other desirable qualities into their cameras' lenses, rather than concentrating only on the lenses' resolution.
- (B) Apart from differences in resolution, there is no practical difference among modern cameras in the quality of the images that they produce.
- (C) Advertised differences among cameras in the resolution of their lenses have no practical bearing on the cameras' relative quality as photographic tools.
- (D) In concentrating their advertising on the issue of image quality, manufacturers are making a mistake about the interests of potential purchasers of cameras.
- (E) Differences among photographic films in the amount of detail they reproduce have a more significant effect on the quality of the developed image than do differences in the resolution of camera lenses.

63. Maria: Calling any state totalitarian is misleading: it implies total state control of all aspects of life. The real world contains no political entity exercising literally total control over even one such aspect. This is because any system of control is inefficient, and, therefore, its degree of control is partial.

James: A one-party state that has tried to exercise control over most aspects of a society and that has, broadly speaking, managed to do so is totalitarian. Such a system's practical inefficiencies do not limit the aptness of the term, which does not describe a state's actual degree of control as much as it describes the nature of a state's ambitions.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses Maria's main conclusion?<sup>63</sup>

- (A) No state can be called totalitarian without inviting a mistaken belief.
- (B) To be totalitarian, a state must totally control society.
- (C) The degree of control exercised by a state is necessarily partial.
- (D) No existing state currently has even one aspect of society under total control.
- (E) Systems of control are inevitably inefficient.

<sup>60</sup> PT22-S2-Q2

<sup>61</sup> PT28-S1-Q18

<sup>62</sup> PT34-S2-Q15

<sup>63</sup> PT16-S3-Q19

## 18 • Main Conclusion

64. Helen: It was wrong of my brother Mark to tell our mother that the reason he had missed her birthday party the evening before was that he had been in a traffic accident and that by the time he was released from the hospital emergency room the party was long over. Saying something that is false can never be other than morally wrong, and there had been no such accident—Mark had simply forgotten all about the party.

The main conclusion drawn in Helen's argument is that<sup>64</sup>

- (A) Mark did not tell his mother the truth
  - (B) the real reason Mark missed his mother's birthday party was that he had forgotten all about it
  - (C) it is wrong to attempt to avoid blame for one's failure to do something by claiming that one was prevented from doing that thing by events outside one's control
  - (D) it was wrong of Mark to tell his mother that he had missed her birthday party as a result of having been in a traffic accident
  - (E) it is always wrong not to tell the truth
65. The end of an action is the intended outcome of the action and not a mere by-product of the action, and the end's value is thus the only reason for the action. So while it is true that not every end's value will justify any means, and even, perhaps, that there is no end whose value will justify every means, it is clear that nothing will justify a means except an end's value.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument?<sup>65</sup>

- (A) The value of some ends may justify any means.
- (B) One can always justify a given action by appeal to the value of its intended outcome.
- (C) One can justify an action only by appeal to the value of its intended outcome.
- (D) Only the value of the by-products of an action can justify that action.
- (E) Nothing can justify the intended outcome of an action except the value of that action's actual outcomes.

66. If citizens do not exercise their right to vote, then democratic institutions will crumble and, as a consequence, much valuable social cohesion will be lost. Of course, one person's vote can only make an imperceptible difference to the result of an election, but one must consider the likely effects of large numbers of people failing to vote. An act or omission by one person is not right if such an act or omission done by large numbers of people would be socially damaging. Organized society would be impossible if theft were common, though a single dishonest act on the part of a single person is likely to have an insignificant effect upon society.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the argument?<sup>66</sup>

- (A) People in a democracy should not neglect to vote.
- (B) Dishonest acts and failure to vote are equally damaging.
- (C) There is a risk that individual antisocial acts will be imitated by others.
- (D) A single person's vote or wrongful act can in fact make a great deal of difference.
- (E) Large-scale dishonesty and neglect of public duty will be destructive of democratic and other societies.

67. Editorialist: The positions advanced by radical environmentalists often contain hypotheses that are false and proposals that are economically infeasible. But there is a positive role to be played even by these extremists, for the social and political inertia that attends environmental issues is so stubborn that even small areas of progress can be made only if the populace fears environmental disaster, however untenable the reasons for those fears may be.

Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main conclusion of the editorialist's argument?<sup>67</sup>

- (A) The little progress that has been made in improving the environment is mainly due to the fear created by radical environmentalists.
- (B) Radical environmentalists, by promoting their views, stimulate progress on environmental issues.
- (C) Social and political inertia is most effectively overcome by an extremely fearful populace, regardless of whether its fears are well-founded.
- (D) Radical environmentalists often put forth untenable positions in order to produce the fear that is required to bring about moderate reforms.
- (E) Radical environmentalists advocate positions without regard for factual support or economic feasibility.

<sup>64</sup> PT23-S3-Q21

<sup>65</sup> PT23-S3-Q25

<sup>66</sup> PT28-S3-Q14

<sup>67</sup> PT34-S2-Q18

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**MAIN CONCLUSION****Difficulty: 1**

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. E
5. C
6. E
7. C
8. E
9. C
10. B
11. C
12. D
13. E
14. E
15. B
16. A
17. E
18. B
19. B
20. C
21. A
22. D
23. A
24. A
25. C
26. E
27. B
28. C
29. E
30. A
31. D
32. D
33. C
34. E
35. E

**Difficulty: 2**

36. A
37. C
38. B
39. A
40. D
41. E
42. A
43. C
44. D
45. E
46. B
47. C
48. A
49. C
50. A
51. E
52. C
53. A
54. C
55. C
56. C
57. C

**Difficulty: 3**

58. C
59. A
60. B
61. E
62. C

**Difficulty: 4**

63. A
64. D
65. C
66. A
67. B

## 20 • Index

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