

Critical Reasoning Question Bank

20 COMPREHENSIVE PRACTICE SETS FOR CAT BLUEPRINT

DIFFICULTY: EASY (QUESTIONS 1 - 6)

Q1. Broadcasters are noticing that viewers are switching off traditional cable networks in favor of online streaming services. To combat this loss of revenue, cable companies should lower their monthly subscription costs to make traditional TV packages more appealing.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the recommendation above?

- A) Online streaming platforms offer highly specialized, original content that cannot be broadcasted on traditional cable network rules.
- B) The average consumer already spends more money on high-speed internet required for streaming than on entry-level cable options.
- C) A significant segment of cable television subscribers are older adults who do not possess internet connections.
- D) Lowering fees below current operating margins will force cable networks to drop key sports channels, which is the sole reason remaining users keep their subscriptions.

Correct Answer: D

Solution: The goal of the recommendation is to retain revenue by dropping costs. If Option D is true, dropping costs forces them to drop critical channels, which destroys the primary remaining incentive for users to keep cable, completely defeating the purpose of the recommendation.

Q2. Recent studies indicate that companies offering flexible work hours notice a 25% surge in baseline individual productivity compared to rigid schedule environments. Therefore, scheduling flexibility is the direct catalyst for enhanced corporate efficiency.

Which of the following points represents an assumption required by the argument?

- A) Employees working flexible hours spend fewer hours browsing non-work related sites during official project timelines.
- B) The studied firms did not simultaneously roll out newer digital task automation software that accelerated output metrics.
- C) Rigid baseline working frameworks are psychologically destructive to creative sector professionals.
- D) High-paying jobs naturally incorporate standard remote operational models out of structural design.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: The argument infers a pure cause-and-effect link. To safely assume flexibility caused the efficiency bump, we must rule out other concurrent updates (like automation tools) that could independently explain the 25% efficiency surge.

Q3. Regular running lowers the risk of developing dynamic cardiovascular ailments. This conclusion is verified by a survey tracking 5,000 active marathon runners who consistently display optimal heart health parameters.

Which of the following options highlights the core flaw in the argument's experimental sampling choice?

- A) The sample size of 5,000 individuals is too low to extract valid statistical conclusions.
- B) The survey fails to detail the precise shoe gear engineering choices made by the long-distance runners.
- C) Marathon runners possess pre-existing elite physical baselines and do not represent the average general population.
- D) The survey did not track cross-training behaviors such as swimming or daily yoga disciplines.

Correct Answer: C

Solution: The argument generalizes benefits for the population using an extreme sub-sample (marathoners) who already display far higher baseline health profiles than an average citizen. This creates a selection bias flaw.

Q4. City Transit Authority: Last year, we added three new late-night bus routes, and criminal incidents near transit hubs decreased by 15%. Clearly, adding late-night transit options improves public safety in urban corridors.

Which of the following, if true, most severely undermines the Transit Authority's conclusion?

- A) The late-night buses were frequently delayed due to ongoing road maintenance work.
- B) Concurrently, the city deployed an extra 200 foot-patrol officers directly around those transit hubs.
- C) Nearby suburbs saw a minor increase in traffic congestion over the exact same annual timeline.
- D) The fare price for traveling on late-night routes was slightly higher than standard daytime pricing models.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: If 200 extra officers were deployed at the exact same time around those precise hubs, the safety improvement can easily be attributed to the police presence rather than the new bus routes.

Q5. Organic vegetables contain significantly fewer synthetic chemical pesticide residues compared to conventionally farmed options. Therefore, consumers seeking to minimize overall dietary pesticide exposure should purchase organic foods exclusively.

The reasoning above relies on which of the following unstated assumptions?

- A) Conventional farming techniques produce higher crop yields per acre than organic protocols.
- B) Organic items are not treated with natural organic pesticides that carry equal toxicity risks.
- C) Consumers are generally incapable of washing away conventional chemical sprays using standard tap water methods.
- D) The nutritional profiles of organic items are completely identical to those found in standard supermarket variants.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: The author assumes that "fewer synthetic chemical residues" equates to "lower overall pesticide exposure." If organic foods use non-synthetic/natural pesticides that are just as toxic, the core conclusion fails.

Q6. Editorial: Government funding for local libraries should not be cut. Libraries provide free access to internet terminals and educational books, which are vital resources for lower-income residents looking to improve their job prospects.

Which of the following, if true, provides the strongest logical justification for the editorial's stance?

- A) Most high-income individuals buy their books from online retail entities.
- B) Lower-income residents who utilize library computers successfully secure jobs at a much higher rate than those without access.
- C) Libraries also host weekly community events such as book clubs and children's storytelling events.
- D) The cost of maintaining physical books has steadily decreased due to recent digital scanning advancements.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: This directly strengthens the premise that the library provides vital job-seeking resources to the target demographic, demonstrating a clear positive outcome that justifies continued funding.

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM (QUESTIONS 7 - 14)

Q7. Standard economic theory dictates that when a luxury brand increases prices, customer demand drops. However, for Brand X, a 30% increase in the pricing of their flagship leather bag resulted in an immediate 45% spike in quarterly regional sales volume.

Which of the following variations resolves the apparent paradox outlined above?

- A) Brand X invested heavily in building an environmentally sustainable leather sourcing supply network.
- B) The pricing update crossed a critical threshold that positioned the product as an elite status indicator for high-net-worth buyers.
- C) Counterfeit manufacturers stopped replicating Brand X designs due to strict trademark lawsuits.
- D) Competitor luxury brands maintained their legacy prices across matching product segments.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: This introduces Veblen goods logic. For certain elite luxury tiers, a price increase acts as a signal of heightened prestige and exclusive status, directly driving up demand among target consumers.

Q8. Software developers who listen to instrumental music write code with fewer structural errors than those working in silent rooms. Thus, ambient sounds enhance human brain processing accuracy during complex logistical tasks.

Which of the following statements, if true, most effectively challenges the causal assumption above?

- A) Software developers working in silence are usually assigned the most convoluted and error-prone legacy architecture frameworks.
- B) Instrumental music tracks do not trigger standard verbal comprehension sectors inside the human temporal lobe.
- C) Junior coders are more likely to listen to high-tempo tracks than senior engineers who manage design structures.
- D) The research sample group included engineers working across distinct, multi-continental office times.

Correct Answer: A

Solution: This exposes an alternate cause/reverse causality flaw. The difference in error rates isn't caused by the music or silence, but by the fact that silent rooms are intentionally given much more difficult, error-prone tasks.

Q9. Marine biologists found that fish populations residing near deep-sea thermal vents are highly resilient to rapid temperature fluctuations. They hypothesized that exposure to unpredictable geothermic activity primes the local ecosystem to tolerate climate shifts.

Which of the following investigations would be most useful in evaluating the marine biologists' hypothesis?

- A) Checking if identical species raised in stable lab setups demonstrate identical temperature tolerance profiles.
- B) Measuring the exact chemical composition of mineral deposits ejected by the deep-sea geothermic vents.
- C) Reviewing historical records of oceanic temperature shifts over the last three centuries.
- D) Comparing the survival rates of vent fish against surface-level fish when both are exposed to extreme industrial toxins.

Correct Answer: A

Solution: If lab-raised fish (without vent exposure) show the same resilience, the trait is genetic/evolutionary, not "primed by active exposure." If they fail, the exposure hypothesis holds up. This makes it an ideal evaluation test.

Q10. Legal Analyst: High-profile corporate fraud cases are rarely settled quickly because both sides possess massive financial assets to prolong litigation. Therefore, the average resolution time for any corporate fraud trial is directly proportional to the total net worth of the defendant.

Which of the following points represents the strongest logical vulnerability in the analyst's conclusion?

- A) It fails to account for mid-tier fraud cases where defendants have limited assets but still prolong trials via pro-bono defense pipelines.
- B) It presumes that the financial strength of the prosecuting entity is always completely static and unlimited.
- C) It ignores the fact that regulatory authorities frequently fast-track highly visible cases to maintain investor confidence.
- D) It draws a broad conclusion about all corporate fraud trials based purely on data from extreme, high-profile exceptions.

Correct Answer: D

Solution: The analyst introduces a scope mismatch error. They take a premise specifically about "high-profile" exceptions and expand it to predict the "average resolution time for any" corporate fraud case.

Q11. Agricultural Analyst: Last year's drought in the northern province reduced wheat yields by 40%. However, local farm revenues in that province actually hit record highs. Thus, environmental crises are financially advantageous for farming communities.

Which of the following, if true, provides the best explanation for the unexpected revenue performance?

- A) The government provided tax credits to urban grocery stores to offset rising distribution expenses.
- B) Due to the severe local supply deficit, the market price of northern wheat surged by over 120% due to inelastic demand.
- C) Farmers in the southern province experienced perfect weather conditions and doubled their total output.
- D) Many farms shifted from growing wheat to cultivating high-volume root crops midway through the season.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: If supply drops by 40% but unit price surges by 120% due to high/inelastic demand, the total revenue (Price x Quantity) will net out significantly higher, resolving the paradox.

Q12. The city of Oakhaven saw a 30% drop in overall residential burglary rates after installing smart streetlights that illuminate dark pedestrian walkways. The City Council concluded that bright lighting discourages criminals by increasing the probability of identification.

Which of the following, if true, casts the most doubt on the City Council's logic?

- A) The smart streetlights use energy-efficient LED modules that reduced municipal power bills by 10%.
- B) Neighboring cities that did not install smart streetlights noticed stable burglary trends during the same timeframe.
- C) Concurrently, a major economic revitalization project demolished several abandoned housing blocks where stolen goods were routinely traded.
- D) Most residential burglaries in Oakhaven are historically committed during midday hours when streetlights are inactive.

Correct Answer: D

Solution: If the burglaries happen primarily during midday hours, the streetlights (which only turn on at night) cannot possibly be the causal mechanism driving down the crime rate. This breaks the temporal logic of the conclusion.

Q13. Nutritionist: A diet high in processed sugars systematically disrupts gut bacteria, leading to chronic low energy. Since Participant Group A reported sustained energy improvements after cutting processed sugars, their gut microbiome balance must have returned to optimal levels.

The flawed pattern of reasoning in the Nutritionist's argument is most structurally identical to which of the following?

- A) Heavy rain triggers severe mudslides along the highway. Since there are no mudslides today, it cannot be raining.
- B) A faulty alternator causes a vehicle's battery to drain completely. Since this vehicle's battery is fully drained, its alternator must be faulty.
- C) Regular practice allows a musician to execute complex solos flawlessly. Since Clara practices daily, she will play perfectly.
- D) High interest rates reduce consumer spending on luxury real estate assets. Since interest rates just fell, real estate spending will rise.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: The argument makes a classic formal logic error: Affirming the Consequent (*If $P \rightarrow Q$; Q occurred, therefore P must have caused it*). It ignores alternative causes for energy improvement, exactly mirror-imaged by Option B.

Q14. Archaeologists recovered pottery shards from a remote island site containing chemical traces of exotic spices native exclusively to a mainland civilization 1,000 miles away. They concluded that the islanders engaged in direct maritime trade with the mainland civilization.

Which of the following options, if true, strengthens the archaeologists' stance?

- A) The mainland civilization possessed advanced deep-hull vessels capable of traversing open ocean distances.
- B) The pottery shards were constructed using local clay found exclusively along the island's coastal shelf lines.
- C) No intermediate island chain cultures between the mainland and this site show evidence of utilizing these exotic spices.
- D) The spices were primarily used during high-status religious ceremonies rather than daily cooking routines.

Correct Answer: C

Solution: By ruling out a key alternative pathway (indirect/step-by-step trade moving across intermediate islands), Option C directly strengthens the assertion that the trade link was direct.

DIFFICULTY: TOUGH (QUESTIONS 15 - 20)

Q15. Economist: When a government enforces rigid rent-control caps, property owners scale back maintenance spending, triggering urban decay. However, in City Y, the introduction of a aggressive rent-control cap was followed by an unprecedented 20% spike in private building upkeep investments over five years.

Which of the following, if true, provides the most cohesive reconciliation of the economist's rule and the reality of City Y?

- A) City Y implemented severe municipal penalties on landlords failing to meet structural codes, with fines doubling the cost of standard maintenance.
- B) The average household income in City Y increased at a rate slightly above the national baseline over that timeline.
- C) Rent-control measures were initially proposed by grassroots community activists to stop gentrification.
- D) Publicly funded infrastructure projects in City Y upgraded public parks adjacent to rent-controlled properties.

Correct Answer: A

Solution: This resolves the paradox by introducing an overriding economic counter-incentive. Landlords invested in upkeep not because they wanted to, but because *not* doing so would cost them twice as much in fines, overriding the rent-cap penalty.

Q16. Purely academic historical analysts argue that the fall of the Zephyrus dynasty was caused entirely by internal administrative corruption. However, strategic militaristic records show that contemporary nomadic invasions destabilized trade routes, cutting off imperial tax bases. Therefore, the administrative corruption was merely a secondary symptom of a broken macroeconomic foundation.

The structural reasoning of the argument is designed to achieve which of the following objectives?

- A) Reconcile two matching interpretations by identifying a common underlying variable.
- B) Demonstrate that an explicit historical correlation was purely coincidental and lacks causal links.
- C) Argue that a factor traditionally defined as the independent cause was actually an intermediate effect driven by an external source.
- D) Undermine a claim by showing that its primary premises are historically inaccurate and fabricated.

Correct Answer: C

Solution: The author reframes "administrative corruption" (which academics called the standalone cause) as an intermediate step/symptom caused by a deeper problem: the macro-economic tax base crisis triggered by nomadic invasions.

Q17. Medical Ethicist: A pharmaceutical entity developed an effective vaccine for a rare tropical disease but set an extreme per-dose price point. Critics claim the company is acting unethically. However, unless private companies can generate exceptional profits from niche research, they will pivot capital away from rare diseases entirely, halting future breakthrough drugs. Therefore, the company's pricing model is ethically justified.

Which of the following, if true, exposes the most critical logical vulnerability in the Ethicist's justification framework?

- A) The vaccine development project was entirely funded by public government grants rather than the firm's private capital reserves.
- B) Other pharmaceutical firms generate consistent, stable profits by producing general everyday medications.
- C) The tropical disease primarily affects developing nations with limited healthcare infrastructure spending.
- D) The company intends to donate a tiny fraction of its surplus vaccine inventory to global charity organizations.

Correct Answer: A

Solution: The Ethicist's defense rests on the premise that high prices are required to protect and reward the use of *private risk capital*. If the project was paid for entirely by *public grants*, the core justification for requiring high private profit incentives falls apart completely.

Q18. Neuroscientist: Human decision-making isn't a purely rational process. Our brains contain neural shortcut loops that trigger fast emotional selections before the analytical cortex can process facts. Thus, advertisements that target emotional triggers are fundamentally more effective than those presenting structural product features.

Which of the following statements represents a critical flaw in the neuroscientist's leap to real-world marketing strategy?

- A) Many consumers can recall the specific pricing details listed in logical advertisements long after viewing them.
- B) The emotional shortcut loop can trigger fast negative feelings like distrust, leading to an immediate rejection of the product.
- C) Analytical cortex calculations take only a fraction of a millisecond longer than emotional neural pathways.
- D) Product feature explanations can be designed to look visually appealing using modern graphical tools.

Correct Answer: B

Solution: The author assumes that because emotional responses are faster, they are "fundamentally more effective" for driving sales. If Option B is true, that fast emotional response can be intensely negative (distrust), causing immediate failure and breaking the argument's logic.

Q19. Management Consultant: Firms that implement strict non-disclosure and non-compete clauses experience a 40% reduction in intellectual property leaks. However, these same firms experience a distinct stagnation in long-term innovation indices because internal engineers cannot freely collaborate with external research consortiums. Therefore, protecting corporate secrets compromises market competitiveness.

Which of the following represents an unstated assumption essential to the consultant's final deduction?

- A) Intellectual property leaks do not inflict catastrophic financial damages that destroy market competitiveness instantly.
- B) External research consortiums require all participants to share core operational insights openly.
- C) Competitor firms that lack strict non-compete rules systematically poach top engineering talent.
- D) Long-term innovation is the single most valued metric reviewed by investment banking analysts.

Correct Answer: A

Solution: The consultant concludes that avoiding innovation stagnation is worth the risk, and that protecting secrets hurts competitiveness overall. This holds true *only* if the IP leaks themselves aren't so devastating that they wipe out competitiveness entirely from the start.

Q20. Theoretical Physicist: A new dark matter detection model yielded no tangible results during its initial two-year test cycle in an underground laboratory. Critics claim the underlying equations are flawed. However, the detector's sensors are calibrated to register particles that interact only during specific, cyclical alignment phases of solar systems, which occur once every decade. Therefore, the lack of data does not invalidate the hypothesis.

The physicist defends the model primarily by doing which of the following?

- A) Introducing external empirical evidence that proves the critics are misinterpreting the core sensor readouts.
- B) Demonstrating that the critics' counter-theories are mathematically impossible under standard quantum models.
- C) Clarifying structural boundary constraints showing that the window of experimental observation was insufficient for a true test.
- D) Shifting the burden of proof onto the critics by challenging them to design an alternative detection mechanism.

Correct Answer: C

Solution: The physicist defends the project by pointing out a temporal constraint flaw in the critics' timeline: since the event only triggers once a decade, evaluating the system based on a short two-year window is an insufficient observation timeline.