

Assumptions -1

- An assumption is merely an unstated (implied) premise.
- In logically correct arguments which contain an assumption, the premise + assumption = conclusion.
- If the question stem asks you “what is assumed...” then you should identify unstated premise of passage. Look for a gap in logic.

Assumptions - 2

Ask yourself, “What must be true to make the conclusion valid?” (Using the premise + assumption = equation formula).

- Remember, since the assumption is an UNSTATED premise, any answer choice that comes from the passage to support your assumption is necessarily incorrect. The answer will be implied, not explicitly stated.

Assumption -3

An assumption bridges the gap between argument’s stated premises and conclusion.

- Use denial test.
- Compare premise words against conclusion.

For assumption questions, find the conclusion and determine which answer choice needs to be true for a conclusion to be valid.

Strengthen the Argument

Find the logical gap and fix it with additional information. This is the ONLY type of GMAT question where additional information (outside of the question) can/should be used.

• Correct answers to this question type will:

- Connect evidence with conclusion better.
- Make conclusion stronger.
- Strengthen the evidence with new information (perhaps an assumption is needed to make the argument work)

Strengthen/Weaken

Strengthen/Weaken questions are the most common Critical Reasoning (CR) question type on the GMAT.

- Break down piece of evidence.
- Attack validity of an assumption.
- Don’t try to prove or disprove conclusion.
- Tip the scales.

Strengthen/Weaken

Don’t be careless! Wrong answer choices often have exactly opposite of desired effect.

- Double-check that your answer satisfies the question stem, not the opposite of the question stem.

Weaken/Strengthen

When you compare two items, you must be sure that the two items are indeed comparable.

Inference

Consider the evidence, draw a conclusion.

An inference is an extension of an argument, not a necessary part of it.

A valid inference is a conclusion, but not necessarily the conclusion, of a set of statements.

For inference questions, determine which answer choice must absolutely, positively be true based on what you've read.

- Pick the obvious answer choice.
- Avoid extreme answers (too strong or too weak)

Inference vs. Assumption

An inference is a conclusion that can be drawn based on one or more of the statements in the stimulus. An inference must be true based on something that you read.

An assumption is a missing but necessary piece of evidence. An assumption is something that must be true in order for the argument to be complete

Numbers, Percentages

Watch for the distinction between NUMBERS and PERCENTAGES.

Inference

Inference questions are usually very basic, about one or more premises. PICK THE OBVIOUS ANSWER (even if it seems too obvious).

Resolve the Paradox

To solve this type of question, look for a logically contradictory discrepancy.

- Often the correct answer will take a similar format (in terms of answer length or argument structure).

Mimic the Reasoning

Follow same line of reasoning from the passage in the answer.

Eliminate the question stem detail to create a shorthand version of the argument structure.

- Question Stem: "If it rains, then I will stay at home today."
- Shorthand: "If A, then B."
- Answer: "If A, then B."

Statistical Assumptions

Are the statistics representative?

Is the question stem doing a lure and switch in terms of numbers?

Is the question stem using numbers to assume something is so, when the numbers aren't actually helping explain the phenomenon given?

7 Principles of CR

1. Understand structure of argument. Identify premise (P), conclusion (C) and any unstated assumptions. Look for structural signpost words which mark P and C.
2. Preview question before reading passage.
3. Paraphrase passage's point or main idea using one verb "i.e., explain, criticize, compare, contrast".³
4. Judge argument's persuasiveness while reading actively.
5. Answer question being asked.
6. Prephrase answer.
7. Keep SCOPE in mind. Moderate rather than strong words / qualifiers usually correct.

Paraphrasing and Prephrasing

Paraphrasing

- Actively translate passages into your own words.
- Pretend you are explaining the information in a passage to a 10-year-old kid.

Pre phrasing

- Think about what form the correct answer will take.
- As you do more questions, you will begin to "guess" correctly, as you start to think as the test makers do.

Strategy

Identify the conclusion and find the answer that addresses the conclusion. Most questions follow this guideline.

4-Step Method

1. Preview question stem.
2. Read stimulus and paraphrase if tricky.
3. Prephrase answer.
4. Choose an answer which answers question stem

Indicate Flaw

Use the information that is present in the passage to answer "Indicate the Flaw" CR questions.

Not about new information like "Weaken" CR questions.

Irrelevant

Watch for irrelevant or overly strong answer choices in CR.

Stay within SCOPE and TONE of passage

Negate (Counterattack)

For assumption questions, negate CR answer choice to see if the conclusion can survive

Statistics

When an argument is based on statistics, it is usually assumed that the people polled are representative of the whole

Questions Involving Surveys

Consider: Does the survey accurately represent the views of the whole group surveyed? Is there a statistics bait and switch?

Scope Shifts

Be wary of scope shifts. Look for tentmakers' tricks:

- Sometimes a passage will begin with one group and draw a conclusion about another group. Similarly, a passage might have weak premises and then draw an overbroad conclusion.
- Other times the tone of the passage moves so far that the testtaker is left wondering, "How did that conclusion come about?"