LSAT WIZARD

Covid-Relief

LR + RC COURSE

Sponsored by Ave Maria

School of Law

Lesson 3 Outline

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PART 3:

Fallacies

CONCEPTS PART 3: METHODS OF REASONING + FALLACIES

I.   **CONCEPT: METHODS OF REASONING + FALLACIES**

    a. Whether you are analyzing reasoning using Logic or otherwise, we can begin to break down different styles of reasoning into broad categories. The categories are NOT meant to highlight valid or invalid reasoning; they are just meant to give general descriptions of the TYPE of evidence used to reach certain TYPES of conclusions! These we can refer to as METHODS OF REASONING.

        i. Note: not all arguments fit "neatly" into one of these methods, plus some arguments can easily be described as fitting into more than one!

    b. For each of the methods, most variants will be invalid, these variants we will refer to as FALLACIES. A **fallacy** is a categorical type of mistake. Most often, the mistake is one that the human brain might commit, despite it being invalid.

    c. The most important aspect with each fallacy, is we need to be able to (1) recognize the pattern as it is happening and (2) be ready for the predictable assumptions / overlooked options that can be tested in reference of them.

        i. A few points to be clear:

            1. You do NOT want to emphasize going from "the name of the fallacy" to being able to "describing it." What you want is the ability to go from a description of it to being able to name it!

            2. Further, you do NOT need to memorize the list or even be able to perfectly remember my name of these fallacies. It truly is about understand the underlying logic and being ready for the predictable responses!

    d. In summation, you need to understand the components of that fallacy so that we can best identify it as you see it in a paragraph and utilize that identification to answer the questions, regardless of Question Type.

        i. As we go through the different fallacies, we will be hitting on:

            1. The _identifying features_ of the fallacy;

            2. The _descriptive language_ used to describe this fallacy;

            3. The _assumptions_ that arise out of the fallacy;

            4. A _simplified example_ intended to reinforce the fallacy.

II.   <u>**THE METHODS + FALLACIES:**</u>

a. <u>**Judgements**</u>
- i. **Generally** = when the evidence provides certain characteristics of a subject matter or circumstance to either assume or conclude different, but related, characteristics about that same subject matter or circumstance.

- ii. **FALLACIES**:

    1. **Using One Factor As Conclusive**

<u>Using One Factor as Conclusive</u>

- b. Identifying Features:
    - i. This is where the evidence will be a "factor" contributing to the conclusions point, but the conclusion technically rests on a collection of factors. Thus, the one factor they are relying on is not proof of the conclusion.

- c. Descriptive Language:
    - i. "The author overlooks off-setting factors"

- d. Assumptions:
    - i. The author has overlooked the possibility that other factors may off-set the evidence to overall come out against the conclusion.

- e. Simplified Example:
    - i. Brandon stole this cell phone. Thus, he acted immorally.
        1. *While stealing would undoubtedly contribute to an argument that someone is immoral, it is not conclusive proof. There are many reasons Brandon may not have been acting immorally.*

III.   <u>**Generalizations**</u>
- a. **Generally** = when the evidence provides certain characteristics about a subject matter or circumstance to either assume or conclude the same characteristics about a different subject matter or circumstance.

    - i. **FALLACIES**:

        1. **Analogy**

      2. Unrepresentative Sample
      3. Parts-to-Whole
      4. Whole-to-Parts
      5. Past-to-Future

<u>Analogies</u>

    a. Identifying Features:
        ii. The evidence will be a comparison (i.e. an analogy!) in relating to the conclusion.
            1. Analogies are always invalid as they assume that literally everything relevant holds true of the two items being compared.

        iii. Descriptive Language:
            1. "The conclusion wrongly uses an analogy to reach its conclusion."

        iv. Assumptions:
            1. The author fails to consider that [anything that would make the two items from the analogy different]

        v. Simplified Example
            1. Business X has had very similar sales and customers to your business over the last 5 years. However, Business X recently implemented an online marketing campaign and saw a huge boost in sales. So if you were to do a similar marketing campaign, your company would also see a boost in sales!
               a. *This overlooks anything that would make the businesses different*

<u>Unrepresentative Sample</u>

    b. Identifying Features:
        i. The evidence will be about specific examples and the conclusion will be based on a broader subject matter.

    c. Descriptive Language:
        i. "The argument uses individual examples to draw a broad conclusion."
        ii. "The conclusion is based on an unrepresentative sample."

    d. Assumptions:
        i. This overlooks that the smaller group is not indicative of the entire larger population

    e. Simplified Example:

          i.   A recent study of mothers in our club shows that almost 90% prefer chocolate cake over vanilla cake. So if you have to decide between a chocolate or vanilla cake and you want to please most women in our club, you should choose a chocolate cake.

              1.   *This overlooks that mothers are not entirely representative of women!*

Whole-to-Part and Parts-to-Whole Flaws

    f.   Identifying Features:

        i.   Whole-to-Part → The evidence gives a generalized characterization of a larger subject and the conclusion will be a characterization of a specific part or parts of that larger subject.

        ii.   Parts-to-Whole → The evidence will involve a characterization of many individual parts of a larger subject and then will make a conclusion characterizing the subject as a whole.

             1.   The problem is that the compilation of individual aspects of the same characteristic may change the characteristic of the new combined creation.

                  a.   Ex. If you combine a million small items, the new creation will probably not be small.

    g.   Descriptive Language:

        i.   "The conclusion wrongly associates the characterization of individual parts as a characterization of the whole."

        ii.   "The author's evidence only discusses specific parts of the whole in reaching the broader conclusion."

    h.   Note:

        i.   Sometimes this logic may be valid, but it depends on the nature of the characterization. A chair made up of all metal parts would be a metal chair.

    i.   Simplified Example:

        i.   Parts-to-whole: Each paragraph of this novel is long, thus the book must be long.

        ii.   Whole-to-parts: This is a long novel, thus the first paragraph must be long.

Past-To-Future

        iii.   Identifying Features:

        1. The evidence will be based on events from the past in order to conclude about a future date.

    iv. Assumptions:

        1. Failure to account for any changes or things that could create a change

    v. Simplified Example:

        1. Every day for the last month I have woken up before 8 am. Thus, tomorrow I will wake up before 8 am.

            a. *If we find out anything that would make tonight or tomorrow morning different than the last month in a way that could affect sleep, this would be an appropriate overlooked option.*

IV. **Causality**

a. **Generally** = This deals with all variants of where a conclusion is trying to explain WHY something is happening / has happened.

    i. **FALLACIES**:

        1. **Taking Correlation as Cause**
            a. Not Causality, but watch out for "A is correlated with B, thus Alpha is causing B."
        2. **Taking Negative / No Correlation to indicate Negative / No Cause**
        3. **Explanatory Conclusions**
        4. **Causal Chains**

V. Taking Correlation as Cause

a. Identifying Features:
    i. The evidence will establish a correlation between two factors and the conclusion will be based on the two factors having a causal relationship.

    ii. A big problem is that the evidence may *imply* the connection, even very strongly, but it is not sufficient to *conclude* that it will definitely happen.

b. Descriptive Language:
    i. "The author has mistaken a correlation to reach a conclusion that one caused the other."

c. Assumptions:
    i. Failure to account for some alternative explanation for the correlation

        1. Specifically:
            a. Failure to account for a third factor independently causing the two.
            b. Failure to account for the second factor causing the first.

  d. Simplified Example:
    i. A study shows that people had acne breakouts 3 times more often on days after eating chocolate than on days they had not. This study proves the theory that eating chocolate causes acne.
        1. *This overlooks other factors that could explain the correlation, like stress!*

VI.   <u>Taking Negative / No Correlation to indicate Negative / No Cause</u>

  a. Identifying Features:
    i. The evidence will point out that two ideas are either the same or even run counter to intuition, creating a "negative" or "no correlation" connection. From there, the conclusion will be that the two ideas have no causal relationship (or that it had the opposite effect, we call "negative cause")

  b. Assumptions:
    i. Overlooks that a cause could be affecting things at an "internal" level and that the situation would have been different without the "cause" item!

  c. Simplified Example:
    i. People who stretch before exercise have the same injury rates as people who do not stretch. Thus, the common belief that stretching helps prevent injuries is a myth!
        1. *This overlooks other factors that the people who are stretching could be injury prone and, thus, would have had worse injury rates without stretching! Stretching is what got them to be "equal" to the others!*

VII.   <u>Explanatory Conclusions</u>

  a. Identifying Features:
    i. This is a general fallacy where the author attempts to conclude an explanation to something that happened because that explanation *could* be an explanation, without giving enough evidence to establish that it *is* the explanation.

  b. Assumptions:
    i. Overlooks basically any other cause!

  c. Simplified Example:
    i. Brandon got a really high score on his LSAT. Thus, whatever LSAT course he took must be good!

1. *This overlooks literally any other explanation for Brandon's high score! Even if common thought would be it was his course that helped, the evidence is far from establishing that it is!*

Causal Chains

d. Identifying Features:
   i. Generally, this will be like "A" causes "B" and "B" causes "C"… so "A" causes "C"

      1. This is tricky, as it appears to many as a "transitive" issue that would be valid. However, "cause" is not strong enough to guarantee the transition and, thus, is not 100% true!

e. Descriptive Language:
   i. "The argument overlooks the cumulative effects of 'A'."

f. Assumptions:
   i. While A might "cause B," it could also cause other issues that are much more detrimental "C" that would off-set the "gains" from B causing C.

g. Simplified Example
   i. Lowering body fat promotes good health and my diet guarantees you will lower your body fat. Therefore, my diet promotes good health.
      1. *This overlooks that the diet have negative health effects that offset the gains from lowering your body fat. For example, my diet could be to not eat!*

VIII. **Conditional Reasoning**
   a. **Generally** = This deals with all variants of where the evidence provides a conditional premise and the author relies on that conditionality to reach their conclusion.

      i. **FALLACIES**:

         1. **Confusing Necessary Conditions with Sufficient Conditions** (both as Rule + Application and Transitive)
         2. **Assumed Triggers**
         3. **Incorrect Some/Most Connections**

Confusing Necessary vs. Sufficient

a. Identifying Features:
i. The Necessary vs. Sufficient flaw is when the author wrongly applies conditional principles and essentially "flips" the if-then logic.
a. Remember:
i. Sufficient = if
ii. Necessary = then
ii. The two most basic forms of this fallacy:
1. A → B
a. Example 1: We have B, therefore we have A
b. Example 2: We don't have A, therefore we don't have B

2. These are "patterns 2 and 3" of conditionality from Chapter 1(a)

b. Descriptive Language:
i. "The author mistakes something that is necessary with something that is sufficient."
1. *TIP*: There is a difference between "treating a necessary condition as sufficient" and "treating a sufficient condition as necessary."

c. Assumptions:
i. Failure to account for the possibility that you can have [the necessary condition] without having [the sufficient condition].

ii. *Tendency:* This mostly happens with "non-blatant" conditional language and rarely happens with "blatant" conditional language!
1. As a reminder, the "blatant" conditionals are "if," "only," and "unless."

d. Simplified Example:
i. Anyone who studies for professor Jones' exam will get a good grade. Brandon is refusing to study. Therefore, he will not get a good grade.
1. *would lead to a good grade, but it overlooks he could already have enough knowledge/skill to get a good grade without studying!*

Assumed Triggers

e. Identifying Features:
i. The premise will be based on a conditional aspect requiring multiple conditions. The evidence will only properly discuss certain elements, ignoring one or more of the listed items, but the author will reach the conclusion anyways.
1. Basically:
a. A + B + C → X
b. We have A + B, therefore we will have X

    f.   Assumptions:
        i.   Assuming that you have [the ignored element].

        ii.   TIP: This is most often done in a subtle way, where the paragraph with be:
            a.   A → B ….. therefore we have B. Assuming that we have A.

    g.   Simplified Example:
        i.   Anyone who studies for the LSAT for at least three months and takes 10 practice exams will get a good grade. Brandon studied for the LSAT and took 10 practice tests. Thus, he will get a good grade on the LSAT.
            1.   *This overlooks that he may not have studied for at least three months!*

Incorrect Some/Most connections

    a.   Identifying Features:
        ii.   This involves all incorrect uses of the some/most chains! As there are so many various ones, this is a general categorization.

    b.   Simplified Example:
        iii.   All of Brandon's friends are males. Most males like football. Thus, most of Brandon's friends must like football.
            1.   *This overlooks that he could be friends with the minority of males that like football! The problem comes from trying to do transitive with a weak value!*

Counter-points

    b.   **Generally** = this encompasses all times the author is attacking an "alternative perspective"

        i.   **FALLACIES**:

            1.   **Attacking Evidence/Assumptions to Say Conclusion is False**

Attacking Evidence/Assumptions to Say Conclusion is False

    c.   Identifying Features:
        i.   This most often happens where there is an alternative position, where the alternative's evidence is validly dismissed, but then the main conclusion is to completely dismiss the alternative.

    d.   Descriptive Language:
        i.   "The argument reaches a conclusion more definite than the evidence permits"

e. Assumptions:
   i. The author has overlooked the possibility that a conclusion may be nonetheless correct even if for the wrong reason.

f. Simplified Example:
   i. Joe says that research method X is the best because it is the most accurate. But a quick analysis shows that method X is far from the most accurate; therefore, research method X is not the best.
      1. *This overlooks that there could be other reasons for why X is the best besides for its accuracy.*

IX. **Comparative**
   a. **Generally** = This deals with all variants of where the author is dealing with issues of relativity!

      i. **FALLACIES**:

         1. **Mistaking Absolute with Relative**
         2. **Relying on Incorrect Absolute/Relative Degree**
         3. **Confusing Internal Relative vs External Relative**
         4. **Polarizations**

Mistaking Absolute with Relative

   c. Identifying Features:
      iv. The author's conclusion will invalidly compare, contrast, or rely on subjects of differing degrees. Specifically, the evidence will switch from relative degrees to absolute degrees or vice-a-versa.

   d. Descriptive Language:
      v. "The author has mistakenly relative degrees with absolute degrees"

   e. Assumptions:
      vi. Language Jump between the different type of degrees

   f. Simplified Example:
      vii. If you're tall, you are good at basketball. Brandon is the tallest person in his family, thus, he must be good at basketball.
         1. *This overlooks that his family could all be very short and Brandon is just taller than the rest of them, but not "tall"*

Confusing Internal Relative vs External Relative

      g. Identifying Features:

          viii. This is a switch in degree between two different types of relative analysis:

             1. An internal relative is where the comparison is of the same subject matter (ex. the more you study, the more you'll improve your score).

             2. An external relative is where the comparison is of different subject matters (the person who studies the most will get the highest score).

          ix. These two degrees cannot be compared!

      h. Descriptive Language:

          x. "The author has improperly equated to different types of comparisons."

      i. Assumptions:

          xi. This overlooks that the groups start at different relativities and so the "internal" influence does not necessarily affect the "external" relativeness.

      j. Simplified Example:

          xii. The more a student studies, the more they will improve their grade. Therefore, if Melissa studies more than Brandon, she will get a better grade than him.

             1. *Brandon could be starting with a much higher score, so even if he doesn't study at all and does not improve at all, he could still score higher!*

Relying on Incorrect Absolute/Relative Degree

      k. Identifying Features:

          xiii. The conclusion will be a type of issue that inherently should be based on either absolute or relative values. The evidence will use the wrong one.

             1. This is really just a spin on "absolute vs relative" but rather than the language explicitly stating the degree, the conclusion is based on an idea that inherently relies on it.

      l. Simplified Example:

          xiv. Activity X has had 10x the number of accidents as Activity Y. Thus, Activity Y must be safer.

             1. *Safety should be based on the relative amount of accidents, not comparing the absolute amounts!*

Polarizations

      h. Identifying Features:

   i. The argument will rightfully have "two-sides," but there is a middle ground where any number of options may exist. Nonetheless, the argument will proceed as if there are only two options.

   ii. Usually the argument has wrongfully applied the two options as the only options, leaving out the possibility of there being the middle ground.

  i. Assumptions:
   i. The author has failed to account for [the "middle" options].

  j. Simplified Example:
   i. If you are tall, then you are good at basketball. Brandon is awful at basketball. Therefore, he must be short.
    1. *The conditional evidence would allow us to conclude validly that Brandon is not tall, but that does not mean he is short! He could be average height!*

X. **Process of Elimination**
  a. **Generally** = the conclusion points to one option out of multiple, based on the elimination of the other options

   i. **FALLACIES**:

    1. **Proving One to Disprove Another**
    2. **Disproving One to Prove Another**

Proving One to Disprove Another / Disproving One to Prove Another

  a. Identifying Features:
   ii. The author's argument will focus on discrediting or disproving a claim made by an opponent; however, the author will not discuss any evidence directly related to his alternative position despite concluding that he is correct.

   iii. Simply invalidating the one position's argument does not inherently make the alternative claim valid.

  b. Descriptive Language:
   iv. "The author has failed to properly establish that [his position or evidence of his position] must occur."

  c. Assumptions:

          v. There are actually two specific issues tested with this fallacy:

              1. There is not evidence about the "side" the author chooses.

              2. There is no evidence that these are the only two options

d. Simplified Example:

          vi. It has recently become clear that Senator Bob has been lying to our county for the last 10 years. So in the upcoming election, you should vote for Candidate Joe.

              1. *First, we know nothing about Joe. Second, we do not know if they are the only two options!*

e. **<u>Ad Hominem</u>**

      vii. **Generally** = These are all of the issues that focus on SOURCE!

     viii. **FALLACIES**:

              1. **Appeals**

              2. **Attacking the Source's Character/Bias/Motive**

              3. **Attacking Proponents/Opponents**

<u>Appeals</u>

f. Identifying Features:

          ix. The author provides a person's credentials or uses the public opinion to provide legitimacy to a claim.

              1. We call these "appeals to authority" or "appeals to masses"

g. Descriptive Language:

          x. "The author focuses on the proponent's authority, rather than the merits of the claim."

h. Simplified Example:

          xi. Senator Bob's new proposal is to turn the park into a parking lot in order to solve the city's parking problem. Senator Bob is a wonderful senator who has always served our county right. [This also could have been "a recent poll shows that 99% of people think its going to work.] Therefore, this proposal will work.

              1. *This example is based on an appeal to Senator Bob's reputation/authority [or evidence that an overwhelming majority think it will work] and provides no proof as to how it will actually work.*

<u>Attack the Source's Character/Bias/Motive</u>

i. Identifying Features:

xii. The argument uses people's motives as reasoning for why something will/should happen or not.

j. Descriptive Language:

xiii. "The argument basis its conclusion on the motives of the proponents/opponents, rather than any valid evidence."

k. Simplified Example:

xiv. Senator Bob's new proposal is to turn the park into a parking lot in order to solve the city's parking problem. However, Senator Bob stands to make millions of dollars on the project. So obviously it won't actually solve our parking problem.

1. *The project could still work even if Bob makes millions of dollars!*

Attacking Proponents/Opponents, Not the Claim

l. Identifying Features:

xv. The evidence will discuss or attack the character or some personal trait of the proponents or opponents of the claim rather than the claim itself.

m. Descriptive Language:

xvi. "The argument focuses on the proponents/opponents of the claim, rather than the claim itself."

n. Simplified Example:

xvii. Senator Bob's new proposal is to turn the park into a parking lot in order to solve the city's parking problem. The only people opposing the proposal are the awful people of the Purple Party. So obviously, this is not a good proposal.

1. *Who supports or opposes a position has no logical bearing on how good or successful it is!*

o. **Miscellaneous**

xviii. **Generally** = this list is not just a "catch-all", but most of these are RARELY occurring in the stimulus, but they are often tested as TRAP ANSWERS!

xix. **FALLACIES**:

1. **Shifting Meaning Of A Word**
2. **Irrelevant Evidence**
3. **Circular Reasoning**

Shifting Meaning of a Word

    p. Identifying Features:
        xx. For this to be correct, two phrases will revolve around the use of the same word where the word is used in different manners.

    q. Descriptive Language:
        xxi. "The argument relies on two different uses of [the word]."
        xxii. "The author fails to adequately define [the word]."
        xxiii. "The author distorts the meaning of [the word] in reaching his conclusion."

    r. Simplified Example:
        xxiv. Brandon says that consistent practice will always lead towards an improvement in your scores. Over the last 3 months, I have consistently practiced once per week. So if Brandon is right, I should see improvement in my score.
                1. *This is improper/ambiguous usage of the word "consistent." Consistently practicing once per week may not be what Brandon meant by "consistent practice."*

Irrelevant Evidence

    s. Identifying Features:
        xxv. The argument will discuss a tangential issue to the actual claim in attempt to prove or disprove the claim.

    t. Descriptive Language:
        xxvi. "The author uses irrelevant facts to promote the argument."

    u. Tip:
        xxvii. This can only be when the evidence does not even slightly imply the conclusion!

    v. Simplified Example:
        xxviii. Senator Bob's new proposal is to turn the park into a parking lot in order to solve the city's parking problem. The opponents of the bill have been critical of several other proposals this year, so this suggests it is actually a good proposal.
                1. *Whether the opponents criticized other proposals (when we don't know anything about the other proposals or how successful they were) has no relevancy to whether Bob's proposal is good.*

Circular Reasoning

    b. Identifying Features:

      i.   Circular Reasoning is the process of using your conclusion as your evidence.

c.   Descriptive Language:
      i.   "The argument assumes what is seeks to establish."
      ii.   "The argument employs circular reasoning."
      iii.   "The argument uses as evidence what it ultimately concludes."

d.   Assumptions:
      i.   The problem is that you are assuming your conclusion!

e.   Simplified Example:
      i.   Our market research has finally proven that our cereal is a favorite amongst health nuts. The people we identified in our study as "health nuts" chose our cereal as the tastiest in blind food tastings. We were able to identify the "health nuts" as those that had consistently purchased our cereal.
           1.   *The argument takes people who already favor the cereal as those that are health nuts to then prove that when those people preferred the company's cereal, that "health nuts" preferred the cereal. This is circular.*

LOGICAL REASONING

QUESTION TYPES

Part 3

I.   **QUESTION TYPE: FLAWS**

    a. CONCEPTUALLY:

        i. A **flaw** is an *error in reasoning* that makes the conclusion invalid.

        ii. On a flaw question, you are essentially being asked the question: "*WHY* IS THE CONCLUSION INVALID?"

    b. QUESTION STEMS:

        i. "The argument is flawed in which of the following ways?"
        ii. "Which of the following best describes an error in reasoning in the argument?"
        iii. "The argument is vulnerable to the criticism on the grounds that:"

    c. FAMILY: INVALID

    d. PRE-ANSWER:

        i. Use the INVALID PRE-ANSWER approach.
            1. That is, try to name a Language Jump, a Fallacy, or an Overlooked Option
                a. While finding just one of these is okay, the best pre-answers are when you can do all three, as the correct answer may relate to any one of the three!
                    i. Remember, it is not always possible to do all 3!

            2. *NOTE*: For Flaws, there is a breadth of directions the question may test and there is no major tendency; this can make these questions much harder to pre-answer. Remember that it is always okay to not pre-answer these at all, as long as you can properly TEST your answer choices!

    e. TEST:

        i. There are four types of answer choices you can have on Flaws, with each having its own Test! Accordingly, you need to be able to identify which of the four you have!

        ii. The four types—with the identifying features and their tests—are:

            1. Necessary Assumption Statements

                a. Identifying language:
                    i. "The author assumes that…"

        ii.   "The author presumes that…"

       iii.   "The author takes for granted that…"

  b. Test:

      i.   NEGATION TEST!

        A) If the "not true" version of your answer choice would weaken or be a problem for your argument, than this is the correct answer!

2. <u>Overlooked Options Statements</u>

  a. Identifying language:

      i.   "The author fails to account for the possibility that…"

      ii.   "The author has overlooked the possibility that…"

      iii.   "The author ignores, without considering, that…"

  b. Test:

      i.   Just determine if the answer choice weakens the argument!

        A) Remember that a "Overlooked Option" is really an opposite of an Assumption Statement and is something that by itself would create a problem for the argument. Thus, ***you can test it by plugging it right in and seeing if it is a problem! It is essentially the "Negation Test" but without negating!***

3. <u>Jump Statements</u>

  a. Identifying language:

      i.   "The author confuses _____ with _____."

      ii.   "The author infers _____ from _____."

      iii.   "The author concludes _____ on the basis of _____."

  b. Test:

      i.   Use your Language Jump method to determine if the two ideas connected in the answer choice were trying to be connected through the argument.

        A) TIP: If the answer specifically uses structural words indicating conclusion and/or evidence, make sure that portion is applied correctly!

4. Descriptions of Fallacies

    a. Identifying language:
        i. It will be language describing a particular fallacy

    b. Test:
        i. Look for the appropriate components of that description in the paragraph!

    c. *Tip*: Most of these will actually appear in the "format" of one of the other 3 types of answer choices. However, if you recognize the general descriptive language, use this test instead!

iii. Examples:
1. J'07, s. 2, q. 4
2. J'07, s. 2, q. 17
3. J'07, s. 2, q. 21
4. J'07, s. 3, q. 4
5. J'07, s. 3, q. 8
6. J'07, s. 3, q. 18
7. J'07, s. 3, q. 23
8. J'07, s. 3, q. 25

II. QUESTION SUB-FAMILY: IMPLICATIONS

a. CONCEPTUALLY:

    i. For these questions, as with all INVALID questions, the paragraph will be invalid and, thus, will have some sort of underlying assumption. Rather than asking directly for these underlying assumptions or to generally identify the logical fallacy, these questions will instead ask you to identify an answer choice that would IMPLY something about the conclusion. We must recognize that the correct answer does NOT need to validly be "on target" to anything in the paragraph. Rather, it only needs to *alter the likelihood* of the conclusion in order to be correct.

b. IMPLICATION INVALID QUESTIONS:

1. Strengthen
2. Weaken
3. Most Useful
4. Paradox

III.   **QUESTION TYPES: STRENGTHEN / WEAKEN / MOST USEFUL**

  a. QUESTION STEMS:
    i. Weaken:
      1. Which one of the following, if true, would weaken the conclusion?
      2. Which one of the following, if true, would most undermine the conclusion?
        a. Other "weaken" synonyms:
          i. Attack, refutes, cast doubt, challenge, damage, counter

    ii. Strengthen:
      1. Which one of the following, if true, would strengthen the conclusion?
      2. Which one of the following, if true, most supports the argument?

    iii. Most Useful
      1. The answer to which one of the following would be most useful in assessing the conclusion?

  b. CONCEPTUALLY:
    i. A weaken question will ask you to identify a new piece of evidence that, if true, would "weaken" the argument or conclusion.
      1. To weaken the argument or conclusion, the new piece of evidence does not have to entirely disrupt or disprove the underlying logic; it merely must make the conclusion *slightly less likely*.

      2. The incorrect answers will either strengthen or do nothing to the conclusion

    ii. A strengthen question will ask you to identify a new piece of evidence that, if true, would "strengthen" the argument or conclusion.
      1. Similar to weaken questions, to strengthen the argument or conclusion, the new piece of evidence merely must make the conclusion *slightly more likely*.

      2. The incorrect answers will either weaken or do nothing to the conclusion

    iii. A most useful question will ask you to pick an answer choice most often in the form of a question, where the answer to that question would either strengthen or weaken the conclusion.

    iv. Again, the key to these questions is that the correct answer does not have to be "on target" with the paragraph; it merely must IMPLY something about the conclusion. Therefore, it is possible—even probable—that there must be an assumption made that even makes the correct answer connect to the paragraph. Because of this, the correct answer can at first seem unrelated or random!

c. Generally, there are three ways that an answer choice can indirectly imply something about a conclusion:

    1. Imply something about an assumption

    2. Adding/Subtracting the same type of evidence

    3. Presenting a potential explanation for the evidence AND tying it with the conclusion!

d. <u>FAMILY:</u> INVALID

e. <u>PRE-ASWER:</u>

    i. Due to the breadth of possibilities in the direction the actual answer can go, we do not try to pre-answer with a specific answer choice. Rather, you should just rely on the INVALID PRE-ANSWER approach to create a general direction for the answers.

    ii. Thus, you should first determine "WHY IS IT INVALID?"

        1. Again, try to come up with a Jump, a Fallacy, or an Overlooked Option

        2. If you cannot come up with any, you should at the very least identify the main conclusion and the main evidence used to support it.

            a. One additional strategy that is specific to WEAKEN questions is to negate the conclusion in order to better identify the position you are trying to support. From there, the question is more like a Strengthen or Paradox!

f. <u>TEST:</u>

    i. Perhaps more important than any test is being aware of the various TRAPS that are common to these questions. Specifically, there are several traps you should be on the look-out for in order to avoid:

        1. Presenting a potential explanation for the evidence, but NOT tying it with the conclusion

        2. *Seemingly* changing the likelihood of the evidence. Remember, you cannot question or alter the truth of the evidence!

3. Answers that would strengthen a weaken question or weaken a strengthen!

4. Over-implying an answer choice. That is, coming up with an incorrect implication related to how the answer would connect with the paragraph.

ii. While there is no single precise test that will work, there are several different tests that can be used to help you avoid these traps. The different tests are:

1. Following the "chain of implication"

    a. This entails "talking out" each step/jump you would have to make to get from the answer choice to the conclusion.

    b. This will help you avoid Traps #1 and #3!

2. Negate your answer choice

    a. If the negation of the answer choice strengthens, then the answer choice weakens and vice-versa!

    b. This should be used if you are not sure if the answer is "strong enough." Be aware, you need to make sure you are still not falling for Trap #2.

3. Trying to make the argument for the "other direction"

    a. That is, if you think this answer might weaken, you should try to come up with a way in which the answer might potentially strengthen (and vice-versa). If the "other direction" is just as direct of an implication, then your answer choice does NOTHING and is not correct!

    b. This will help you avoid Trap #4.

g. MORE SPECIFIC POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPLYING SOMETHING ABOUT AN ASSUMPTION:

i. While there is a great variety of possible answer choices for any of these questions, we do know that a high percentage of the correct answers will relate to the

underlying assumptions. Thus, we can narrow down our expectations when we pre-answer in certain ways

If you see a…

1. **JUMP**
   a. Weaken →
      i. Present information about one "side" that would tend to make it different than the word to which it had been equated.

   b. Strengthen →
      i. Present information about one "side" that would tend to make it similar to the word to which it had been equated.

2. **FALLACY**
   a. Weaken →
      i. More likely than not, they will simply test the overlooked option that arises from that fallacy! So see below!

   b. Strengthen →
      i. They can add more of the same type of evidence, even it is normally invalid, because it still might make the conclusion *more likely!*

3. **OVERLOOKED OPTIONS**
   a. Weaken →
      i. Present evidence that would suggest the presence of an alternative option. Alternatively, you could present evidence that would discount the likelihood that the option relied upon exists.

   b. Strengthen →
      i. Present evidence that would increase the likelihood of the relied upon option. This could be simply dismissing the existence of any of the other options.

h. <u>EXAMPLES:</u>
   i. Weaken:
      1. J'07, s. 2, q. 5
      2. J'07, s. 2, q. 9

3. J'07, s. 2, q. 14
4. J'07, s. 3, q. 15
5. J'07, s. 3, q. 21

ii. Strengthen:
1. J'07, s. 3, q. 13
2. J'07, s. 3, q. 19
   a. J'07, s. 2, q. 19 (EXCEPT)

iii. Most Useful:
1. These are relatively rare and none occurred on the June 2007 test!

IV. **PARADOX**
a. CONCEPTUALLY:
   i. Paradox questions involve paragraphs in which the information is either counter-intuitive or, even, seemingly contradictory. The goal of paradox questions is to identify an answer choice that will make the two "sides" of the paradox *slightly more compatible*.
   ii. For these questions, we do NOT need to identify a conclusion! Rather, we attack this question by identifying the "two sides" to the paradox.

   iii. It is important to recognize that while these are NOT technically invalid paragraphs, the reason for why the information is seemingly contradictory is for the same reasons why the invalid paragraphs are invalid.

      1. That is, we can find fallacies, overlooked possibilities, or even changes in language when relating the "two sides"

   iv. TIP: As these are also implication questions, the correct answer may require a further assumption to influence the compatibility. In fact, the correct answer only has to touch one side, not both. That is, on the judgment scale, you only have to "lower" one side or "raise" the other to balance the scale.

b. QUESTION STEMS:
   i. Which one of the following would help to resolve the paradox?
   ii. Which one of the following helps to explain the discrepancy?
   iii. Which one of the following helps to reconcile the difference between ___ and ___?

c. PRE-ANSWER:
   i. Step 1: Identify the "two-sides" of the paradox. Fill in the phrase:
      1. "On the one hand _____, yet on the other _____."

        ii. Step 2: Try to come up with a "reason" that the paragraph is actually compatible.

d. <u>TEST:</u>

        i. Read each answer choice and determine whether it "helps" to resolve the discrepancy (that is, it brings the two sides closer together).

        ii. Generally, the TRAPS and TESTS from above apply in Paradox questions as well.

e. <u>EXAMPLES</u>:

        i. J'07, s. 2, q. 25
        ii. J'07, s. 3, q. 2

Reading Comprehension

PART 2:

SHARPENING SKILLS

READING COMPREHENSION PART 2: SHARPENING SKILLS

I.   STATE OF MIND READING METHODS

    a. As a reminder, the 7-step method we have been using for reading is NOT an effective method for the day of the test. Rather, we have use this method to train ourselves to be better readers and LSAT test takers. By going extremely slow and thorough, we have developed an ability to maximize our score without concerning ourselves with the test constraints.

    b. Obviously, the test is timed and so we do need to train ourselves to be ready for the timed sections. To best do that, we are going to learn a new drill that will be on the complete opposite end of the 7-step. Similar to the 7-step, however, the method we're about to learn will NOT be utilized strictly on the day of the test. Again, it will be used to train us to work on the underlying skills we will use on test day.

THE COVER-UP DRILL

    c. For this drill, the rules will be simple:

        STEP 1 → READ!

            NOTE: Considering step 2, you will want to read the passage as carefully and thoroughly as possible. Accordingly, you also have unlimited time for this step!

        STEP 2 → "COVER-UP" the passage and ANSWER THE QUESTIONS without looking back! You are allowed EIGHT "UNCOVERS" for the entire section!

            1. What it means to "cover-up" the passage, is essentially to not reference back to the text at any point! If you feel the need to go back, you are allowed to look back, but that counts as one of your two "peaks." Since you are only allowed two "peaks" for each passage, you will want to use them only when doing so will really help you get the correct answer!

I. **HOMEWORK**

The following is the recommended HW to accomplish before going into Lesson 4! As always, there are detailed explanations to all of the HW examples as part of the subscription service on LSATWizard.com!

LR QUESTION TYPE DRILLING!

a. For each of the following question types, do the assigned question. After grading, trying to make sure you can explain why the wrong answers are wrong.

   i. You can/should use this outline to help break it down!

     iii. **Flaws:**
1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 2
2. PT 52, s. 2, q. 6
3. PT 52, s. 3, q. 4
4. PT 52, s. 3, q. 8
5. PT 52, s. 3, q. 12
6. PT 52, s. 3, q. 16
7. PT 52, s. 3, q. 21
8. PT 53, s. 2, q. 18
9. PT 53, s. 2, q. 22

     iv. **Weaken:**
1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 12
2. PT 52, s. 2, q. 21
3. PT 52, s. 3, q. 6
4. PT 52, s. 3, q. 19
5. PT 53, s. 2, q. 3
6. PT 53, s. 2, q. 8
7. PT 53, s. 3, q. 14
8. PT 53, s. 3, q. 16

     v. **Strengthen:**
1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 4
2. PT 52, s. 3, q. 3
3. PT 53, s. 2, q. 1
4. PT 53, s. 2, q. 6
5. PT 53, s. 3, q. 11

     vi. **Most Useful:**
1. ** These questions are relatively uncommon and for the tests I've been using for HW, there were none tested. Remember, they really are just extensions of your strengthen/weaken skills!

vii. **<u>Paradox:</u>**

      1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 11

      2. PT 52, s. 2, q. 14

      3. PT 52, s. 3, q. 20

      4. PT 52, s. 3, q. 22

READING COMPREHENSION:

a. Try the COVER-UP DRILL for the following section → PT 53, s. 4