Covid-Relief

LR + RC COURSE

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School of Law

Lesson 4 Outline

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LOGIC CONCEPTS

PART 4:

Traps

CONCEPTS PART 4: TRAPS

I.   Perhaps the biggest "issue" I hear from students by this point in the course, is that when looking over questions they got wrong, they notice they were between 2 answers: the one they chose and the correct one.

      a.   This is a reality that holds true for **basically every LSAT student!** Even for the 170+ scorers, the questions they get wrong or struggle on, they are between two answers. The key is that the 170 scorers are able to SEE THE LOGIC behind the trap answer more often!

II.   TRAPS are an extension of all of the concepts we learned the first 3 lessons. The key is recognizing the difference between the 2 answers you have left and comparing their logic to each other, and then to the logic of the stimulus.

      a.   Remember, **one answer is 100% wrong and one answer is 100% right!** The difference will always be a LOGICAL issue.

          i.   Broadly, this means something related to one of your pillars:

                1.   STRUCTURE

                2.   LANGUAGE

                3.   DEGREES

                4.   CONDITIONALITY

III.   As we saw in Lessons 2 and 3, we were able to put more concrete "names" to certain mistakes, we called Fallacies. In this lesson, we will learn to apply those to TRAP answers! Below are the list of the most common TRAPS students overlook.

IV.   **Inverse/Converse**; i.e. Incorrect contrapositives; i.e. confusing necessary vs sufficient; i.e. "flipped wrong way"

      a.   Example:

         Brandon refused to study for the LSAT. As a result, he will not get a good grade on the LSAT.

            Which of the following is an assumption required by the argument above?

              •   People who study for the LSAT will get good grades.

              •   Every single person that gets a good grade on the LSAT has put in at least a minimal amount of effort into studying for the test.

      b.   In the example, the "jump" is that NOT STUDYING leads to NOT GETTING A GOOD GRADE.

          i.   The first answer choice is the INVERSE of that jump, saying that STUDYING leads to GOOD GRADES. Thus, it is WRONG!

         ii.   The second would be a CONTRAPOSITIVE of the jump, saying that GOOD GRADES guarantee that person STUDIED. This would be the correct choice!

V.   <u>**Language Jumps**</u>

    a. Example:

Over the last 10 years, students who majored in political science have typically pursued a career in either law or politics.

      Which of the following is most supported by the information above?

- A career in law or politics has been the goal for most political science majors over the last decade.

- For the last decade, most students with an interest in political science have chosen to pursue a career in politics or law.

    b. The first answer choice may reword and reorganize the ideas, but it is still saying the same logical idea! Thus, it would be correct!

    c. The second answer choice uses the wording of "interest" in political science rather than "majoring" in political science. THAT makes it incorrect!

VI.   <u>**Strengthening/weakening evidence**</u> (which must already be accepted)
    a. Note: An answer choice never will DEFINITIVELY go against the evidence; there is always some other reason why the answer is wrong; but if you notice an answer trying to go against the evidence, you MUST reject it!

    b. Example:

Paleontologists found fossil of feather from 50 million years ago. Thus, birds came about 50 million years ago.

      Which of the following would weaken the argument above?

- Paleontologists are not able to accurately date the age of fossils.

- It is theorized that *Tyrannosaurus Rex* had feathers.

    c. The first answer choice is attempting to imply that the feather is not actually 50 million years old. That would be counter to the premise that states that it is! For that reason alone you can eliminate it!
        i. The "technical" reason it does not go against the evidence is because we are not told that the paleontologists are the ones who did the dating!

    d. The second answer is correct as it provides an alternative option for where that feather is coming from!

VII.   **Going the opposite direction** (i.e. strengthening in a weaken; vice versa)

    a. Example:

    The common theory that dinosaurs, such as the *Tyrannosaurus Rex* and *Velociraptor*, had scaly skins that did not have feathers has recently come under attack. However, this attack is unwarranted. While it is true that recently found fossilized feathers have been dated as originating from before the earliest known birds, it is still entirely possible that future findings will suggest that our current beliefs about birds are false.

    Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument?

- The feathers were found next to fossilized footprints resembling a large dinosaur.

- Feathers would have provided no evolutionary advantage to dinosaurs such as *Tyrannosaurus Rex* and *Velociraptor*.

    b. The biggest "challenge" to this question really is understand what "position" you ultimately need to prove! To weaken the argument, would we want evidence that supports or attacks the position that those dinosaurs had feathers.
  - i. Since the conclusion is that "the attack is unwarranted" but we want to weaken it, that means we want to SUPPORT the attack. The attack is of the position that dinosaurs did not have feathers, which would mean we want evidence suggesting that they *did* have feathers.

    c. This is why the first answer would be correct, rather than the second!

VIII.   **Too strong/weak or narrow/broad**
    a. Example:

    Brandon stole this cell phone. Thus, he is immoral.

        Which of the following assumptions must be true in order for the conclusion to be properly drawn?

- Anyone who does something illegal is immoral.

- There is no way to be a moral person if you have stolen something.

    b. The first answer would be acceptable as a SUFFICIENT assumption, but it is NOT necessary. The negation would make it possible to do something illegal without being immoral. This would NOT weaken the argument, because the "something illegal" could be something totally irrelevant to the argument. Essentially, it is not "necessary" that EVERYTHING illegal is immoral; only that steal is. Thus, this is TOO BROAD to be correct.

    c. The second answer when negated would say that you can steal something but there are some ways to still be moral. THAT would weaken the argument and thus would be correct!

IX. **Trap of Neutrality**

    a. Example:

    Environmentalist: I proposed doing X to lower the effects of global warming. Critics say that doing X involves materials that will contribute to global warming. Nonetheless, I believe doing X will accomplish our goal.

        Which of the following would most support the Environmentalists beliefs?

- The negative effects of the materials for doing X are offset by the gains of actually doing X.

- A large company believes that they have discovered ways of doing X without using the materials mentioned by the critics.

    b. The first answer is "helping," but only gets us back to neutral and doesn't tip towards overall being good! Thus, it is wrong!

    c. The second answer doesn't prove that doing X will accomplish the goal, but it definitely suggests that the concerns of the critics are not going to be present! In context of the argument, this would *lean* towards it working to lower effects of global warning!

X. **Multiple Mistakes in the Stimulus!**

    a. Example:

    A new study shows that people who go to the beach at least one time per week develop skin cancer at rates much higher than those who do not. Thus, this research allows us to conclude that spending time in the sun causes skin cancer.

        Which of the following would best describe a flaw in the reasoning?

- The argument infers, solely on the basis that two phenomenon are correlated, that one causes the other.

- The argument presumes, without providing warrant, that people who go to the beach at least one time per week spend more time in the sun than those who do not.

    b. The first answer is tempting! There is an *element* of correlation vs cause! But the argument makes a second mistake, of jumping from "going to the beach at least one time per week" to "spending time in the sun." Because of that jump, the first answer is wrong. It is specifically saying that the "cause" conclusion is between the two items correlated!

    c. The second answer is precisely the jump! So if negated, it would weaken the argument!

XI. **<u>Absolute vs Relative</u>**
  a. Example:

  Brandon is taller than Melissa. Thus, he is better than her at basketball.

  Which of the following would strengthen the argument?

  - Tall people are generally good at basketball.

  - The average professional basketball player is 11 inches taller than the average person.

  b. The first answer is wrong because it is at the ABSOLUTE degree; that is, it is not comparative. It uses the words "tall" and "good" when the argument was about "taller" and "better."

  c. While the second answer is not about Brandon or Melissa, nor does it establish valid proof that "taller is better," it would provide a *stronger* connection between the jump by providing correlation!
    i. Remember, correlation NEVER equals cause; but correlation does STRENGTHEN cause!

  d. **<u>Tougher version: internal relative vs external relative</u>**
    i. Example:

    Our town this year has experienced more rainfall than any year in the past. Thus, we can expect to see stronger crops next harvest.

    Which of the following would most strengthen the argument?

    - Areas with more rainfall tend to have better crops than areas without rainfall.

    - In areas that experience less rainfall than typical, the crop yields tend to be weaker than normal.

    ii. The key difference between the two answers is the "internal" vs "external" comparison. The first answer is comparing areas with more rainfall to *different* areas with less rainfall; this is an "external" comparison. The second answer is comparing *the same area*, just in times with more or less rainfall; this is an "internal" comparison. Since the argument is about an INTERNAL change, the second answer is correct!

      1. Also remember, you CAN do the reverse/inverse when you have "proportionality" (i.e. taller → better, ALSO proves that shorter → worse, AND proves that better → taller)

XII. **Answers that are "inclusive" of the conclusion rather than Excluding the conclusion**

a. Example:

Studies show that people have acne breakouts 3x more often on days after eating chocolate than on days after they do not. Thus, eating chocolate must be contributing to acne breakouts.

The argument depends on which of the following assumptions?

- Stress cannot both lead people to eat chocolate and contribute to acne breakouts.

- There are no other causes of acne besides for eating chocolate.

b. While this second answer is tempting, the technical negation would be "there are other causes of acne besides for eating chocolate." That statement *includes* chocolate as one cause for acne! The negation should weaken the probability that chocolate is a cause!

c. The first answer may seem to be bringing in new information, but that is the point! When you negate it, it provides the overlooked option that can alternatively explain the correlation!

LOGICAL REASONING

QUESTION TYPES

Part 4

I.   **QUESTION TYPE: METHOD OF REASONING**

    a. <u>CONCEPTUALLY:</u>

        i. Method of Argument questions will ask you to identify the manner in which the evidence leads to the conclusion.

    b. <u>QUESTION STEMS:</u>

        i. The argument uses which one of the following argumentative techniques?

        ii. The author's argument proceeds by…

        iii. Person 1 responds to Person 2's argument by…

    c. <u>FAMILY</u>: STRUCTURE

    d. <u>PRE-ANSWER:</u>

        i. Try to "generalize" the evidence.

            1. To do this, focus on the conclusion and, in as few words as possible, describe the evidence.

    e. <u>TEST:</u>

        i. Go answer-by-answer and assess whether the type of evidence they are describing exists in the paragraph.

            1. TIP: Make sure that strength and degree matches!

    f. <u>EXAMPLES:</u>

        i. J'07, s. 2, q. 20

II.   **QUESTION TYPE: PARALLEL**

    a. <u>CONCEPTUALLY:</u>

        i. Parallel questions essentially ask you to identify the answer choice that contains logic analogous to the paragraph's logic.

            1. NOTE: This is purely about the *logical* structure and not at all about the organizational structure or the subject matter!

        ii. There are 3 key areas that a true "parallel" must match:

            1. Number

            2. Strength

            3. Direction

        iii. Number = number of logical phrases and number of logical ideas within a phrase

        iv. Strength = the extent and definitiveness of the language used

        v. Direction = besides the directional "flow" of ideas, the positive + negative aspects

b. QUESTION STEMS:
    i. The reasoning above is most closely paralleled to which one of the following?
    ii. Which one of the following is most similar in its pattern of reasoning to the above?

c. FAMILY: STRUCTURE

d. PRE-ANSWER:
    i. Generally, IDENTIFY THE CONCLUSION and make a GENERIC structure!
        1. Over 90% of parallel questions can be broken down into a conditional "A →
            B" style argument. Even if it cannot, you should be understanding the full
            structure based on NUMBER, STRENGTH, and DIRECTION.

            a. TIP: Make sure you properly identify the separation between the
               evidence and conclusion!

e. TEST:
    i. First, compare the generic language of the paragraph to each answer choice. If it
    does not match the generic phrasing, it cannot be correct.

    ii. If you are breaking it down one phrase at a time, you should start with just the
    conclusion. This might only narrow your answer choices. If so, go back to the
    paragraph and identify a "previous step" in the evidentiary chain (that is, another
    phrase in the reasoning that has some commonality in subject matter). Then use
    this phrase with the same process as above.

        1. Repeat these steps until you have one answer choice left.

        2. TIP: If you are having trouble keeping track of the chain of reasoning and
            your phrasing is conditional, you may try and write it out! Only use this as a
            last resort though.

f. NOTES:
    i. There is almost always at least one long, difficult parallel reasoning question on
    every LSAT. As every question is worth the same value, it may be advisable to skip
    over these questions and save them for the end.

g. EXAMPLES:
    i. J'07, s. 2, q. 12

III. **QUESTION TYPE: FLAWED PARALLEL**

a. CONCEPTUALLY:

   i. Flawed parallels are technically INVALID because we know that there is 100% an invalid argument being made. We discuss these with the other parallel, however, to differentiate between them.

b. QUESTION STEMS:

   i. Which one of the following exhibits the same logical error as that used in the author's argument?

c. FAMILY: INVALID

d. PRE-ANSWER:

   i. For these questions, do NOT use the same approach as other Parallels. Rather, identify the "flaw" (using the same approach you would for normal flaw questions) and find an answer that matches the same type of flaw.

      1. TIP #1:

         a. Sometimes the specific flow of the paragraph is important. For these, you can use the parallel approach, in that you can reduce the structure to generic variables. However, the rules of number/strength/direction do not apply automatically!

      2. TIP #2:

         a. If you cannot identify the flaw in the paragraph, you can use your answer choices to help. Try identifying the flaw in an answer choice, to then assess whether this flaw exists in the paragraph!

e. EXAMPLES:

   i. J'07, s. 2, q. 2
   ii. J'07, s. 3, q. 20

IV. **QUESTION TYPE: COMPLETE THE ARGUMENT**

a. CONCEPTUALLY:

   i. You will be asked to identify an answer choice that would essentially "pick-up" where the paragraph ends.

      1. Most of the time, the paragraph will end with a _____ and you will have to fill in the blank.

b. QUESTION STEMS:

   i. Which one of the following best completes the passage?

c. FAMILY: MISCELLANEOUS!!

d. <u>PRE-ANSWER:</u>
  i. Technically, these end up being other question types in disguise—this is dictated by the structure! So this is why we have to understand the structure first. We need to establish which role the "blank" is meant to play. Generally:
    1. If the blank is evidence → think of it as a strengthen question!
    2. If the blank is a conclusion → think of it as a most supported inference!
      a. The only "extra" is that the inference has to be on target with the main theme of the argument, not just anything that is true!

    3. TIP: Remember that structure is dictated by the transition words!

  ii. At times, however, you might be able to predict the answer based on the structure and flow of the stimulus!

e. <u>TEST:</u>
  i. This is dictated by the question type it is mimicking!

f. NOTE: As is the case with the entire LSAT, there are always "twists" to this where than can be presenting more abstract or less common issues! Trust your instincts with reading the language and interpreting what they are looking for correctly!

g. EXAMPLES:
  i. J'07, s. 2, q. 3
  ii. J'07, s. 2, q. 8
  iii. J'07, s. 3, q. 10
  iv. J'07, s. 3, q. 16

Reading Comprehension

PART 3:

TIMED SECTIONS

READING COMPREHENSION – PART 3

I.   **STATE OF MIND READING METHODS**

    a. As should be understood at this point, we have been attacking reading using one of two different methods: The 7-step and The Cover-Up.

    b. Neither of these methods will actually be optimal for test day. Rather, we have been using these methods to work on fundamental steps towards improving our reading comprehension skills. While it is recommended to continue practicing with those two methods, we do also need to incorporate practice with "normal timed sections" to make sure we are fully ready for test day.

    c. The "ideal" approach for a full timed section—and test day—varies from person to person. You will want to figure out what the best method is for you! As long as you FINISH all passages without feeling rushed, than you can do any balance of note taking, reading passages twice, or looking back to the passage while in the questions.

    d. Generally, I suggest sticking to as close to the cover up method as possible. But one suggestion to help figure out what works for you, is to try different approached while doing TIMED UP sections! If you feel comfortable with that method and are under or close to under time, then you should only need to make minor tweaks from there.

    e. The *only* rule is that you should ALWAYS start your approach with JUST READING without any notes, while reading as thoroughly as if it were the Cover Up method!

II.   **HOMEWORK and TEST DAY**

    a. For homework, you should try to balance between the 7-step drill, the cover-up drill, and normally timed sections. Generally:
        i. If you want to work on accuracy → do the 7-step drill
        ii. If you want to get better at timing → do the cover-up drill, timed up!
        iii. When you do tests or want practice test day readiness → Do normal timing

    b. Beyond this, if you score below 20 points on a section, you likely need to emphasize your accuracy more, so do more 7-step! If you are above 20 consistently, you probably need to work more on the Cover-Up!

    c. Further, for any individual passage that you struggled on, it is ALWAYS advisable to do the 7-step notes AFTER you graded it!

    d. Just remember, when doing the "normal timing," you should simulate the cover-up drill as closely as possible without formally forcing yourself not to look back!

LESSON 4 – HOMEWORK

III. **LESSON 4 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!

   v. **Method of Reasoning:**
        1. PT 52, s. 3, q. 5
        2. PT 53, s. 3, q. 24
        3. PT 54, s. 2, q. 10
        4. PT 54, s. 3, q. 2

   vi. **Parallel:**
        1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 3
        2. PT 53, s. 3, q. 23
        3. PT 54, s. 2, q. 23
        4. PT 54, s. 3, q. 25

   vii. **Flawed Parallel:**
        1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 16
        2. PT 53, s. 2, q. 21
        3. PT 53, s. 3, q. 13
        4. PT 54, s. 3, q. 8

   viii. **Complete the Argument:**
        1. PT 52, s. 2, q. 13
        2. PT 53, s. 3, q. 7
        3. PT 54, s. 2, q. 7

FULL SECTIONS:
a. Try the COVER-UP DRILL for the following sections →
    a. PT 65, section 3
    b. PT 65, section 4

POST-COURSE STUDYING

POST-COURSE STUDYING

I.   Now that you have completed the foundational curriculum to the Logical Reasoning and Reading Comprehension sections, you must keep refining your skills! To do this, you must DRILL and take PRACTICE TESTS. No matter what, the biggest key to improvement is REVIEW!

II.   Generally, DRILLS are exercises we do that are done in certain formats you would NOT do on test day. Each drill works on different skills. Below this section, you will find a list of drills that you should be doing.

III.   Before that, I want to address a big concern for everyone: TIMING.

     a. When you are building your skills, TIMING should NOT be a factor at all. When you either feel ready to start assessing timing or if you get near a test (think 6-8 weeks), you should START with what I call "TIMED UP" sections.
         i. "TIMED UP" refers to setting a stopwatch and seeing how long it takes you at your "comfortable" pace.
             1. As you progress with TIMED UP sections, you should just strive to beat your previous time; even if it is by a few seconds.

     b. As you near closer a test, you should start more formally TIMING sections to STRICT TIMING.

     c. Further, to really prepare for test day, you should start incorporating "UNCONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS" into your prep. This means trying to do work where it is noisy, distracting, etc! You can go to your kitchen of your house, turn on distracting TV in the background, go do work at a public park, etc! This will really help you learn to FOCUS for test day!

IV.   One general gameplan for incorporating these aspects is:

     a. 6 or more weeks out from test day --> continue to do Timed Up and just try to beat your time from previous sections

     b. 4-6 weeks --> if you are within 10-15 mins of "correct pace", keep doing the timed up, trying to shave time each time. If you are more than 15 mins over, you need to start doing stricter timing drills ("cover-up" is the best!). One time per week, start doing a FULL TIMED practice test!

     c. Final 4 weeks --> 1/3 of work should be untimed or timed up drills focused on accuracy… 1/3 should be individual sections in "uncontrolled environments" with strict timing… 1/3 should be normal Practice Tests with strict timing.
         i. If you are comfortable with strict timing, try getting even 1 or 2 minutes better than the strict time!

DRILLS

I.   CONFIDENT DRILL (aka CONFIDENT REVIEW)

    a.   This will actually be *YOUR MOST IMPORTANT* drill / method of review! You can and should be incorporating this with ALL sections, whether you did it timed, untimed or even with a different drill!

    b.   This deals with going through a section THREE times!

        i.   FIRST → "FIRST ATTEMPT"
            1.   Do the section in whatever format you want to work on (timed, untimed, cover-up, etc). Just FLAG any question you are 100% confident you got correct. Do NOT worry about differentiating between whether you are slightly hesitant or totally lost, just flag the ones you are 100% confident.

            2.   The key is, when you are finished, DO NOT GRADE yourself!

        ii.   SECOND → "TARGET REVIEW"
            1.   Pull out a TARGET NUMBER of questions that you are most confident on. Start with a target of 7!
                a.   If you get them all correct, the next section you raise your target by 1!
                b.   If you get ANY amount wrong, lower the target number by just 1!
            2.   During the TARGET REVIEW, even if you are not 100%, you have to hit that number. Even if you are confident on more than the target, you should only pull out that number.
            3.   If done correctly, you are going up or down by 1 each section!

        iii.   THIRD → GRADE and THOROUGH REVIEW
            1.   This is when you go through the correct and incorrect answers, explaining to yourself WHY the right answer is right and MORE IMPORTANT, why the trap answers were wrong!

            2.   The BIGGEST MISTAKE people make is only reviewing the questions you get wrong! You should be reviewing EVERY QUESTION you did not pull out during your confident review! If you weren't 100% confident, then there is something to learn from that question!!

II.   COVER-UP DRILL

      i. This drill was introduced in the RC Lesson 2, but it should be used for both RC and LR!

      ii. To do this drill, do a section where you "cover-up" the stimulus / passage when you go to the answer choices! (You can use a piece of paper and tape!)

          1. You can only "uncover" the passage 8x in the entire section! And when you uncover, you should be covering back up the answer choices!
              a. If done right, you NEVER get the opportunity to see the answer choices side-by-side with the passage / stimulus!

      iii. This drill will FORCE you to read at your most thorough level! Even when we are not doing this drill, you should be THINKING about this drill and reading the same way!

      iv. As you get better, if you want to keep the challenge going, reduce the number of questions you "uncover" by 1! The "best" students can get to 4 uncovers and still score at a "normal" level!