

# Sample GMAT Verbal Questions (Critical Reasoning)

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## Questions 1-10: Strengthen/Weaken the Argument

1. **Question:** A recent study shows that people who regularly eat a specific type of berry have a lower incidence of heart disease than those who do not. The researchers concluded that the berry provides a protective effect against heart disease.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the researchers' conclusion?  
A. The study was funded by a berry growers' association.  
B. The people in the study who ate the berry also tended to exercise more frequently and eat less red meat.  
C. The berry is difficult to find in many parts of the country.  
D. A different study found that a similar type of berry has no effect on heart disease.  
E. The study only included participants from one geographic region.
2. **Question:** The city has decided to install a new, more efficient street lighting system. While the initial cost is high, the new lights will consume significantly less electricity, leading to long-term savings. Therefore, the new lighting system will be a net financial benefit for the city.  
Which of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument above?  
A. The city has a large budget surplus from the previous fiscal year.  
B. The cost of electricity is expected to remain stable over the next decade.  
C. The new lights are aesthetically more pleasing than the old ones.  
D. The city council is popular with voters.  
E. The new lights will require more frequent maintenance than the old ones, but the maintenance costs will be covered by a separate fund.
3. **Question:** The number of students applying to universities has decreased over the past five years. At the same time, the national unemployment rate has remained low. This suggests that fewer people are pursuing higher education because they can find good jobs without a degree.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?  
A. A significant number of students are choosing to attend vocational schools instead of universities.  
B. The cost of a university education has increased dramatically in the last five years.  
C. The population of high school graduates has decreased over the last five years.  
D. Many universities have increased their admission standards, making it harder to get in.  
E. The low unemployment rate is primarily due to jobs that require a university degree.
4. **Question:** A company plans to reduce costs by outsourcing its customer service department to another country where labor is cheaper. This move will significantly increase the company's profitability.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?  
A. The company's main competitor also outsourced its customer service department.  
B. Customers are less likely to buy products from a company with foreign customer service representatives.  
C. The cost of training the new, foreign customer service team will be high.



- D. The company plans to lay off all its current customer service employees.  
E. The company's profit margin has been consistently declining for the past two years.
5. **Question:** A new diet book claims that its regimen, which requires followers to eat only lean protein and vegetables for three months, can lead to a significant and sustained weight loss.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously strengthens the author's claim?  
A. People who follow the diet for six months lose even more weight.  
B. A study showed that individuals who followed the diet for three months lost an average of 15 pounds and kept the weight off for at least one year.  
C. The book's author is a renowned nutritionist with a Ph.D.  
D. The diet is very similar to another popular diet that also promotes weight loss.  
E. Many people who try the diet find it difficult to stick to.
6. **Question:** The introduction of a new high-speed train line between two major cities is expected to reduce traffic congestion on the main highway connecting them, because many people who currently drive will choose to take the train instead.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?  
A. The train tickets will be more expensive than the cost of gasoline and tolls for the drive.  
B. The new train line will not be completed for another five years.  
C. The new high-speed train line will attract many new commuters who would not have previously traveled between the cities.  
D. Most people who drive between the cities do so because they need their car at their destination.  
E. A significant number of people who take the train will be students who do not own cars.
7. **Question:** A small town has experienced a 20% increase in bicycle-related accidents in the past year. In response, the town council has proposed a new law requiring all cyclists to wear helmets. The council argues this law will significantly reduce the number of severe injuries from bicycle accidents.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously strengthens the town council's argument?  
A. Most of the recent bicycle accidents involved cyclists who were not wearing helmets.  
B. The number of bicycles in the town has increased by 15% in the past year.  
C. Helmets are proven to be effective at preventing head injuries in the event of an accident.  
D. The town's population has remained relatively stable over the past year.  
E. Similar helmet laws in other towns have not been shown to reduce the number of bicycle accidents.
8. **Question:** The company has seen a decrease in employee productivity since it switched from a five-day to a four-day work week. This decrease in productivity must be a direct result of the reduced number of workdays.  
Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?  
A. Other companies that have adopted a four-day work week have reported an increase in productivity.  
B. The company recently implemented new, complex software that employees are still learning to use.



- C. A survey of the company's employees revealed that they are happier with the four-day work week.
- D. The company has hired 10% more employees since the switch to the four-day work week.
- E. The company's competitors are still operating on a five-day work week.
9. **Question:** A new vaccine against a common flu strain has been developed. The vaccine is highly effective at preventing the flu in 95% of recipients. Therefore, if the entire population is vaccinated, the flu will be virtually eliminated. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?
- A. The vaccine is too expensive for most people to afford.
- B. The vaccine is only effective against one specific strain of flu, and new strains emerge every year.
- C. The vaccine has some mild side effects, such as fever and muscle aches.
- D. A small percentage of the population has an allergic reaction to the vaccine.
- E. The flu is also spread by people who are not symptomatic.
10. **Question:** The city's recycling program has been a great success, as the amount of trash sent to landfills has decreased by 15% since the program began. Therefore, the program is effectively reducing waste. Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?
- A. The total amount of trash generated by the city has increased by 20% since the program began.
- B. The city's population has decreased by 10% since the program began.
- C. The recycling program is more expensive to operate than the previous trash disposal system.
- D. Many residents are confused about which items can be recycled.
- E. Neighboring cities have similar recycling programs.

### Strengthen/Weaken the Argument

- Correct Answer: B.  
Explanation: The argument concludes that the berry causes a protective effect against heart disease. To weaken this, you need to find an alternative cause for the lower incidence of heart disease. Option B provides a classic alternative cause: people who ate the berry also had other healthy habits (exercise, less red meat) that are known to protect against heart disease. This suggests that the berry might not be the direct cause, but rather just a correlational factor. The other options are either irrelevant (A, C, E) or introduce new information that doesn't directly challenge the causal link (D).
- Correct Answer: B.  
Explanation: The argument concludes that the new lights will be a net financial benefit. This relies on the assumption that the savings from lower electricity use will outweigh the initial cost. To strengthen this, you need to make the savings part of the equation more certain. Option B does this by guaranteeing that the cost of electricity will remain stable, which makes the long-term savings predictable and thus strengthens the claim that the project will be financially beneficial.
- Correct Answer: C.  
Explanation: The argument claims that a decrease in university applications is caused by people finding good jobs without a degree. This links two trends. To



weaken this argument, you must provide a different reason for the decrease in applications. Option C provides a compelling alternative cause: if the pool of potential applicants (high school graduates) has shrunk, then the decrease in applications is simply a reflection of the population change, not a choice made by individuals to pursue jobs instead of education.

4. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The argument claims that outsourcing customer service will lead to increased profitability. To weaken this, you need to show that there is a cost or negative consequence to the outsourcing that the company hasn't accounted for. Option B introduces a potential loss of revenue: if customers are turned off by the foreign customer service, they might stop buying the product, which would decrease profitability despite the lower labor costs.

5. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The claim is that the diet leads to significant and sustained weight loss. To strengthen this, you need evidence that the diet actually works over time. Option B provides a direct, measurable result: a study showing that people not only lost weight but also kept it off for at least one year. This directly supports the "sustained" part of the claim.

6. Correct Answer: C.

Explanation: The argument predicts a reduction in traffic congestion because drivers will switch to the train. The assumption is that the total number of people traveling remains constant. Option C weakens this by introducing a new group of travelers—people who wouldn't have made the trip before—who will now be attracted by the new train line. This could potentially increase the total number of travelers and thus maintain or even increase highway traffic congestion.

7. Correct Answer: C.

Explanation: The council's argument is that a helmet law will reduce severe injuries. The link is between wearing a helmet and a reduction in the severity of injuries. Option C strengthens this link by stating that helmets are proven to be effective at preventing head injuries. While option A seems good, it doesn't directly establish the effectiveness of helmets, only that they weren't worn by the victims. Option C is a stronger, more direct support for the causal link.

8. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The argument states that the four-day work week caused the decrease in productivity. To weaken this, you need to provide an alternative cause for the decrease. Option B offers a new, complex software system that employees are still learning. This is a very plausible reason for a temporary dip in productivity, independent of the work schedule change, thereby weakening the conclusion.

9. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The argument concludes that the flu will be virtually eliminated if everyone is vaccinated. This relies on the assumption that the vaccine covers all the flu that would be a problem. Option B seriously weakens this by stating that the vaccine is only effective against one specific strain, and new strains emerge every year. This means that even with 100% vaccination, new, unvaccinated strains of the flu would still be a problem.

10. Correct Answer: A.

Explanation: The argument concludes that the recycling program is effectively reducing waste. The evidence is that the amount of trash going to landfills has



decreased. Option A weakens this by showing that the total amount of trash generated has increased. This implies that while less is going to the landfill, the recycling program is not reducing waste overall; it is simply diverting a portion of an even larger waste stream.