

Sample GMAT Verbal Questions (Critical Reasoning)

Questions 11-20: Identify the Assumption

11. **Question:** The city library plans to close its main branch on Sundays to save money. Since a recent survey showed that only 5% of its total weekly visitors come on Sundays, the closure will not significantly inconvenience library users. The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. The library's weekday visitors would be willing to visit on Sundays if the library were open.
 - B. The 5% of visitors who use the library on Sundays do not have a pressing need to do so.
 - C. Sunday visitors do not use the library for a disproportionately long amount of time compared to weekday visitors.
 - D. The library could not save a significant amount of money by cutting costs in other areas.
 - E. The survey was representative of the library's total user base.
12. **Question:** A new, highly-realistic video game has just been released. The game's developers claim that playing this game will improve a person's cognitive skills, such as problem-solving and spatial reasoning. The developers' argument relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. People who are already good at problem-solving will be more likely to buy the game.
 - B. The game's cognitive benefits are not outweighed by any negative effects, such as a decrease in physical activity.
 - C. The skills learned in the game can be transferred and applied to real-world situations.
 - D. The video game is more effective at improving cognitive skills than traditional methods, such as reading.
 - E. The game is popular and will be purchased by a large number of people.
13. **Question:** A company has decided to eliminate its employee gym membership subsidy because it believes the subsidy is not a significant factor in attracting or retaining employees. The company's logic is that only a small percentage of its employees actually use the benefit. The company's argument relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. The employees who do not use the gym membership subsidy would not use it even if it were a more attractive benefit.
 - B. The employees who use the gym membership subsidy would not leave the company if the subsidy were eliminated.
 - C. The company's decision will not negatively affect employee morale.
 - D. Employees value the gym membership subsidy less than other company benefits.
 - E. There are no other reasons, besides attracting and retaining employees, for the company to offer the gym subsidy.
14. **Question:** A new law was passed to ban the use of plastic bags in all grocery stores. The law's proponents argue that this will significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste in landfills. The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. The plastic bags currently in use are the primary source of plastic waste in landfills.
 - B. Grocery stores will not switch to a different, equally harmful type of bag, such as paper bags that require more energy to produce.
 - C. A large percentage of the population will comply with the new law.
 - D. The law will not have a negative economic impact on grocery stores.
 - E. Paper bags are a more environmentally friendly alternative to plastic bags.
15. **Question:** In the past year, the average wait time for a customer service call at Company X has decreased by 30%. This is likely due to the company's recent investment in an automated phone system that can handle many common customer inquiries.
- The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. The automated phone system is able to resolve a majority of customer inquiries without human intervention.
 - B. The number of customer service calls to Company X has not significantly increased over the past year.
 - C. The quality of customer service has not decreased as a result of the new automated system.
 - D. Company X's competitors have not also implemented similar automated phone systems.
 - E. The average wait time was a significant problem for customers of Company X.
16. **Question:** The city of Northwood recently opened a new public park, and the mayor claims that this park will lead to an increase in tourism. The mayor's logic is that the new park's unique botanical gardens will attract visitors from outside the city.
- The mayor's argument relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. Northwood has never had a public park before.
 - B. The new botanical gardens are a significant attraction that cannot be found elsewhere.
 - C. The park will be well-maintained and free of charge.
 - D. People who are interested in botanical gardens are also likely to be tourists.
 - E. The city has a sufficient number of hotels and restaurants to accommodate an increase in tourism.
17. **Question:** A local bakery has decided to switch from using all-natural ingredients to using some artificial ingredients to reduce costs. The owner claims that this change will not affect the quality of its products, as taste tests have shown that customers cannot tell the difference.
- The owner's argument relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. The quality of a bakery's product is determined solely by its taste.
 - B. The bakery's customers are not concerned with whether the ingredients are all-natural.
 - C. The new, artificial ingredients will not cause any health problems for consumers.
 - D. The taste tests were conducted under controlled conditions and with a representative sample of customers.
 - E. The bakery will be able to attract new customers with its lower prices.
18. **Question:** A new fitness app was launched with a feature that allows users to compete against their friends. The app's developers claim that this feature will motivate users to exercise more frequently.
- The developers' argument relies on which of the following assumptions?

- A. A significant number of the app's users will have friends who also use the app.
 - B. The new feature will be more effective at motivating users than other features, such as tracking progress.
 - C. Users who are already motivated to exercise will not be discouraged by the competitive aspect of the app.
 - D. Competition is a greater motivator for people to exercise than a desire for self-improvement.
 - E. The app is free to download and use.
19. **Question:** A company has a new policy that allows employees to work from home two days a week. Management believes this policy will lead to a decrease in absenteeism, as employees will be less likely to take a sick day when they can simply work from home.
- The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. The company's new policy will not lead to a decrease in employee productivity.
 - B. A significant portion of employee absenteeism is due to minor illnesses that do not prevent an employee from working.
 - C. Employees who work from home will have the necessary equipment and resources to do their job effectively.
 - D. The majority of employees would prefer to work from home than to come to the office.
 - E. The new policy will not be abused by employees.
20. **Question:** A recent study shows that children who read for 30 minutes every day score higher on standardized tests than children who do not. This suggests that reading for 30 minutes a day causes an increase in test scores.
- The argument above relies on which of the following assumptions?
- A. The children in the study who read every day do not have any other characteristics that might also cause them to have higher test scores.
 - B. The standardized tests are a valid measure of a child's academic ability.
 - C. Reading for more than 30 minutes a day would not lead to an even greater increase in test scores.
 - D. All children have access to books and a quiet place to read.
 - E. The study was conducted on a large and diverse group of children.

Identify the Assumption

11. Correct Answer: B.
- Explanation: The argument concludes that the closure will not significantly inconvenience library users. The evidence is that only 5% of weekly visitors come on Sunday. The unstated link, or assumption, is that the 5% who come on Sundays don't need the library on Sundays for a critical purpose that can't be fulfilled on other days. The inconvenience would be significant if that small group was, for example, comprised of students or researchers who could only visit on Sundays. Option B directly addresses this assumption.
12. Correct Answer: C.
- Explanation: The developers claim playing the game will improve cognitive skills. The unstated assumption is that these skills, which are developed in the context of the game, will be useful outside of the game itself. This is the classic "transferability of

skills" assumption. Without this, the cognitive benefits would be limited to gameplay and not general cognitive improvement.

13. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The company assumes that eliminating a benefit will not have a negative impact on employee retention. The argument's logic is that since a small percentage uses it, its elimination won't matter for retention. This assumes that those who do use the benefit are not a large enough or important enough group to leave the company because of its elimination. Option B directly states this assumption: the employees who use the benefit won't leave.

14. Correct Answer: A.

Explanation: The argument states that banning plastic bags will significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste in landfills. The unstated assumption is that plastic bags are a significant contributor to landfill waste. If plastic bags were only a minor component of the landfill's waste, the law would not lead to a significant reduction. Option A makes this crucial assumption explicit.

15. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The argument claims that the new automated system is the reason for the decrease in wait times. This relies on the assumption that the number of calls hasn't changed. If the number of calls had significantly decreased for some other reason, the wait time would naturally go down, and the automated system wouldn't necessarily be the cause. Therefore, the argument must assume that the total call volume has remained roughly the same.

16. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The mayor's argument is that the unique botanical gardens will attract tourists. For this to be a valid reason, the botanical gardens must be a unique or significant draw that people cannot find easily in their own areas or in other nearby cities. If the gardens were generic, people wouldn't travel to see them. Option B states this assumption explicitly.

17. Correct Answer: A.

Explanation: The owner claims the change will not affect the quality of the products. The evidence is that customers can't taste the difference. This relies on the assumption that taste is the only measure of quality. If quality is also judged by, for example, nutritional value or "all-natural" ingredients, then the quality would be affected.

18. Correct Answer: A.

Explanation: The developers' argument is that the "compete against friends" feature will motivate users. For this feature to be a motivator, the users must have friends on the app to compete against. If most users don't have friends on the app, the feature would be useless and thus couldn't be a motivator.

19. Correct Answer: B.

Explanation: The argument is that the ability to work from home will lead to a decrease in absenteeism. This is based on the idea that employees who would have taken a sick day for a minor illness will now just work from home. The assumption is that a significant portion of absenteeism is indeed due to such minor illnesses. If most absenteeism is due to severe illness or other factors, the policy wouldn't have a significant effect.

20. Correct Answer: A.

Explanation: The argument claims that reading for 30 minutes a day causes an

increase in test scores. This is a classic correlation/causation trap. The argument assumes that the reading is the only difference between the two groups that could account for the difference in test scores. Option A explicitly states this: it assumes there are no other factors (like socioeconomic status, parental involvement, or other study habits) that are also correlated with both reading and high test scores. This is a crucial, unstated assumption.