

LSAT Logical Reasoning Mock Exam 3 - Answer Key and Detailed Explanations

Reviewing the explanations for why the correct answer is best and why the incorrect answers are flawed is the most effective way to internalize LSAT logic.

ANSWER KEY

Question	Correct Answer	Question Type
1	C	Weaken the Argument
2	A	Strengthen the Argument
3	D	Necessary Assumption
4	C	Flaw in the Reasoning
5	D	Main Point
6	C	Parallel Reasoning
7	A	Inference
8	B	Role/Function
9	D	Sufficient Assumption
10	B	Weaken - Causal
11	B	Strengthen - Principle
12	A	Flaw - Source (Ad Hominem)
13	E	Role/Function (Concession)
14	A	Inference - Conditional
15	C	Parallel Flaw

DETAILED EXPLANATIONS

Question 1 (Weaken the Argument)

Argument Core:

- **Premise:** Electric motors are more efficient than gas engines, despite power plant emissions.
- **Conclusion:** Replacing gas buses with electric ones will lead to a **net reduction in pollution**.
- **Analysis:** The argument focuses only on the operational emissions (tailpipe vs. power plant). To weaken it, you need to show an overlooked factor that increases overall pollution or offsets the efficiency gains.

Correct Answer: (C)

(C) introduces a factor outside the operational phase—the manufacture and disposal of the new equipment (especially batteries)—that introduces new environmental hazards not accounted for in the net reduction calculation. This directly challenges the claim that the net environmental effect will be a substantial reduction.

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) Discusses private vehicles, which is irrelevant to the comparison between the old and new public bus fleet.
- (B) This information is already conceded by the planner ("electricity generation required for the new fleet will increase emissions"). It doesn't weaken the conclusion that the efficiency gain *still* outweighs this cost.
- (D) Relates to cost/budget, which is irrelevant to the argument's conclusion about *carbon footprint/pollution*.
- (E) Relates to maintenance, which is irrelevant to the argument's conclusion about *carbon footprint/pollution*.

Question 2 (Strengthen the Argument)

Argument Core:

- **Causal Claim:** Increased profitability was caused by the new **work-from-home policy**, *not* the new productivity software.
- **Evidence:** Both were implemented at the same time as record profits were achieved.
- **Analysis:** To strengthen the conclusion that the software was *not* the cause, we need evidence that breaks the link between the software and the profits.

Correct Answer: (A)

(A) directly undermines the software's supposed influence by stating that employees found it confusing and rarely used it. If the employees weren't using the software, it cannot be the cause of the increased productivity and profit, strengthening the case for the work-from-home policy as the true cause.

Incorrect Answers:

- (B) is a good strengthener, but (A) is more direct. (B) shows the software isn't *always* the cause, but (A) shows it wasn't the cause *in this specific case*.
- (C) Only confirms the effect (high profits), not the cause.
- (D) Explains a background condition that might motivate the WFH policy, but doesn't prove the WFH policy was the *cause* of the profit.
- (E) Discusses cost, which is irrelevant to the question of **causation** for the profits.

Question 3 (Necessary Assumption)

Argument Core:

- **Goal:** Ensure best public health (via mandatory vaccines).
- **Premise:** Without mandatory programs, too many people will choose not to vaccinate, leading to preventable outbreaks.
- **Conclusion:** The government *must* institute mandatory programs.
- **Analysis:** The argument moves from the potential negative outcome (outbreaks) to the necessity of a specific, restrictive policy (mandatory programs). The required assumption must bridge the gap: that the negative outcome is bad enough to **justify** the strong government action.

Correct Answer: (D)

(D) A public health threat caused by preventable outbreaks justifies the use of mandatory government programs. This assumption is required because the argument's conclusion is prescriptive (what the government must do). The justification for mandatory action is that the problem being solved (the threat) is severe enough to warrant the loss of personal choice.

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) The argument doesn't require mandatory programs to be the *only* way, just that they are the necessary response to the stated problem.
- (B) Full compliance is not necessary, just sufficient compliance to prevent the outbreaks.
- (C) The health of the public being the *most* important factor is too strong; the argument only requires it to be a *sufficiently* important factor to justify the action.
- (E) Irrelevant; the argument is about the mandatory *programs*, not the biological capacity of every individual.

Question 4 (Flaw in the Reasoning)

Argument Core:

- **Premise 1:** Academic reputation has improved (judging by rising SAT scores).
- **Premise 2 (Unstated):** The university's goal is to improve academic reputation.
- **Conclusion:** Faculty teaching quality has **also** improved significantly.
- **Analysis:** The professor equates a result (improved reputation/higher SAT scores) with an unproven cause (improved teaching quality). Correlation is confused with causation, and the argument ignores alternative causes for higher SAT scores (e.g., more applicants,

better marketing, changing demographics, etc.).

Correct Answer: (C)

(C) mistakenly assumes that a correlation between two trends demonstrates that one trend must be the cause of the other. The argument assumes the observed correlation (rising SATs and desired reputation) must have been caused by improved teaching, which is a classic flaw.

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) Defining terms is not the central flaw.
- (B) It's not confusing cause and effect; it is confusing **correlation** (SAT rise and teaching rise) for **causation**. The logic itself is not reversed.
- (D) While relying on a single source is a flaw, the more fundamental problem is assuming that the single source *proves* the cause (teaching quality). (C) is the better description of the logical error.
- (E) Irrelevant, as the students' satisfaction level does not affect the logical structure of the argument.

Question 5 (Main Point)

Argument Core:

- **Evidence 1:** Trawling devastates coral/sponge habitats.
- **Evidence 2:** These habitats are crucial nurseries, so their destruction leads to reduced fish populations later.
- **Conclusion Signal:** Consequently...
- **Conclusion:** Trawling undermines the long-term viability of the very fishing industry it serves.

Correct Answer: (D)

(D) Despite its short-term benefits, deep-sea trawling is detrimental to the fishing industry's long-term interests. This captures the argument's central tension: the immediate benefit (efficient, large catches) is undermined by the long-term, destructive consequence (reduced fish populations).

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) Is a supporting premise ("highly efficient"), not the main conclusion.
- (B) Is a supporting premise, explaining *why* the destruction leads to problems.
- (C) Is a policy recommendation that goes beyond the argument's focus on economic viability. The author concludes it's *detrimental to the industry*, not necessarily that it should be *banned*.
- (E) Is a premise, a key finding that supports the ultimate conclusion in (D).

Question 6 (Parallel Reasoning)

Argument Structure: This argument is a formal logical fallacy: **Affirming the Consequent**.

- Premise 1: If I (Innovative) $\rightarrow$ C (Challenges norms)
- Premise 2: C (The painting challenges norms)

- Conclusion: **I** (Therefore, it is innovative)

Correct Answer: (C)

(C) follows the identical flawed pattern:

- Premise 1: If **T** (Trains hard) $\rightarrow$ **I** (Improves time)
- Premise 2: **I** (This runner improved time)
- Conclusion: **T** (Therefore, they must have trained hard)

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) is valid (Modus Tollens: If $P \rightarrow Q$, $\neg Q \rightarrow \neg P$).
- (B) is valid (Modus Ponens: If $P \rightarrow Q$, $P \rightarrow Q$).
- (D) is an invalid negation of the antecedent.
- (E) is a valid conditional statement, but the argument structure is missing. (This is another instance of Affirming the Consequent, but the answer choice structure is slightly different in that it is presented as a singular proposition.) (C) is the clearest parallel to the flaw in the stimulus.

Question 7 (Inference)

Conditional Statements:

1. Bonus $\rightarrow$ 2+ Milestones
 - *Contrapositive*: Not 2+ Milestones $\rightarrow$ Not Bonus
2. Recently Hired $\rightarrow$ Not Bonus
 - *Contrapositive*: Bonus $\rightarrow$ Not Recently Hired

Connecting the Statements: Using the contrapositive of the second statement (Bonus $\rightarrow$ Not Recently Hired) and the first statement (Bonus $\rightarrow$ 2+ Milestones), we can chain them:

- **Bonus $\rightarrow$ 2+ Milestones AND Not Recently Hired**

Correct Answer: (A)

(A) Some employees who achieved two major project milestones were not recently hired. The chained statement shows that anyone who gets a bonus (which requires 2+ milestones) must not be recently hired. Since the bonus-receiving group is a subset of the 2+ milestone group, there must be at least one employee (the one who got the bonus) who achieved 2+ milestones and was not recently hired. This is logically sound.

Question 8 (Role/Function)

Argument Structure:

- Conclusion: The study's finding (noise causes hearing loss) **cannot be sound**.
- Reasoning 1 (Major Premise): Human memory is inherently fallible.
- Reasoning 2 (Supporting Premise): **The study's methodology relied entirely on self-reported data...** (Bolded statement).
- **Analysis:** The bolded statement identifies the problematic aspect of the evidence (the data source) that the author uses to attack the study's conclusion. It describes the data

collection method that is vulnerable to the flaw mentioned in the following premise (fallible memory).

Correct Answer: (B)

(B) It is the evidence used to undermine the reliability of the study's conclusion. It provides the factual description of the study's data-gathering technique, which the author immediately exploits to discredit the conclusion.

Question 9 (Sufficient Assumption)

Conditional Chain:

- Premise 1: Ratified $\rightarrow$ Exports
- Premise 2: Exports $\rightarrow$ Boost
- Intermediate Conclusion: Ratified $\rightarrow$ Boost (If the agreement is ratified, the economy is boosted.)
- **Final Conclusion:** The new trade agreement will **not be ratified**.

Analysis: To guarantee the final conclusion (**Not Ratified**), we need a statement that confirms the sufficient condition (Ratified) is false. Since the intermediate conclusion is Ratified $\rightarrow$ Boost, we can use the contrapositive: Not Boost $\rightarrow$ Not Ratified.

Correct Answer: (D)

(D) The regional economy will not be significantly boosted. This provides the necessary negative condition (Not Boost), which, when combined with the contrapositive of the chain (Not Boost $\rightarrow$ Not Ratified), guarantees the final conclusion (Not Ratified).

Question 10 (Weaken - Causal)

Argument Core:

- **Causation:** Compound Z $\rightarrow$ Directly inhibits aging process.
- **Evidence (Correlation):** Compound Z $\rightarrow$ Increased life span.
- **Analysis:** This is a classic causal argument. To weaken it, we need to show that something else (an alternative cause) is responsible for the effect (increased life span), or that the relationship is reversed, or that the link is not direct.

Correct Answer: (B)

(B) The mice that received Compound Z ate significantly less food than the control group did. This introduces the alternative cause of calorie restriction, which is a widely documented factor for increasing life span in laboratory animals. This weakens the researchers' conclusion that Compound Z was the direct inhibitor of the aging process.

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) Only limits the scope (males), but doesn't weaken the causal mechanism for the affected group.
- (D) Introduces a second benefit (better immunity), but this does not prevent Compound Z from *also* having a direct effect on aging.

Question 11 (Strengthen - Principle)

Argument Core:

- **Principle Applied:** Costs are borne broadly (all taxpayers), but benefits are captured narrowly (wealthy owners/athletes).
- **Conclusion:** The state should **not** fund the stadium.
- **Analysis:** The principle that most strongly supports the conclusion is one that condemns this specific disparity between cost burden and benefit reception.

Correct Answer: (B)

(B) It is unfair for the public to subsidize a private endeavor when the costs are broadly shared but the benefits are narrowly concentrated. This statement perfectly encapsulates the legislator's argument and provides the general, moral rule necessary to support the conclusion that the funding should not happen.

Incorrect Answers:

- (A) Introduces a new, unrelated democratic principle (majority approval).
- (E) Is too strong ("every citizen") and is not required, as the legislator's argument is based on the *disproportionate* nature, not the lack of *any* benefit to all.

Question 12 (Flaw - Source)

Argument Core:

- **Claim A:** The tech pundit made a market prediction.
- **Premise B:** The pundit lacks formal training.
- **Conclusion:** The prediction should be **ignored** (it is worthless).
- **Analysis:** This is the *Ad Hominem* (attacking the person) or *Flaw of Source* fallacy. The argument dismisses the claim solely on the basis of the person making it, without addressing the substance of the prediction itself.

Correct Answer: (A)

(A) attempts to refute a claim by attacking the source of the claim rather than the merits of the claim itself. This is the classic description of the Ad Hominem or Flaw of Source fallacy.

Question 13 (Main Point - Argument Structure)

Argument Structure:

- Statement 1: Geothermal is undeniably cleaner than fossil fuels.
- **Signal:** *However...*
- Statement 2 (Conclusion): **there is no viable path for geothermal to replace fossil fuels... it is, at best, a supplement, not a solution.**
- Supporting Evidence: Geothermal is geographically limited.

Correct Answer: (E)

(E) It is a concession to a potential opposing viewpoint, preceding the introduction of the argument's main conclusion. The author knows a critic might point out geothermal's

environmental benefit ("cleaner than fossil fuels") but concedes this point before pivoting to their main argument (that geothermal is geographically limited and thus cannot replace fossil fuels).

Question 14 (Inference - Conditional)

Conditional Statements:

1. Prioritizes Short-term Profits (PSP) $\rightarrow$ Not Invest R&D
 - *Contrapositive*: Invest R&D $\rightarrow$ Not PSP
2. Invest R&D $\rightarrow$ Highly Likely Competitive (HLC)
 - *Contrapositive*: Not HLC $\rightarrow$ Not Invest R&D

Chaining the Statements: We can chain the first statement with the second (using the contrapositive of the first as an intermediate):

- PSP $\rightarrow$ Not Invest R&D
- Not Invest R&D $\rightarrow$ Not HLC (from the contrapositive of statement 2)
- **Final Chain: PSP $\rightarrow$ Not HLC**

Correct Answer: (A)

(A) No company that prioritizes short-term profits is highly likely to remain technologically competitive in the long term. This is a direct restatement of the valid chain derived above (PSP $\rightarrow$ Not HLC).

Question 15 (Parallel Flaw)

Flawed Structure (Stimulus):

- **Premise:** Critic X made a bad judgment (about the vampire film) in the past.
- **Conclusion:** Critic X's *current* judgment (about the horror movie) cannot be trusted.
- **Flaw:** The argument assumes a failure in judgment in one unrelated area/time automatically invalidates a person's current or different judgment. The critic's poor judgment on *artistic daring* doesn't mean their judgment on *scare factor* is wrong, especially since the two judgments are on different concepts.

Correct Answer: (C)

(C) follows the identical flawed pattern:

- **Premise:** Analyst Y made a wrong prediction about *past* election results.
- **Conclusion:** Analyst Y's *current* prediction (about the incumbent) must be wrong now.
- **Flaw:** The past failure is used to discredit the current (unproven) claim, without any evidence that the analyst is using the same flawed methods or that the current situation is identical to the past.