

# LSAT-TEST<sup>Q&As</sup>

Law School Admission Test: Logical Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, Analytical Reasoning

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**QUESTION 1**

Commissioner: Budget forecasters project a revenue shortfall of a billion dollars in the coming fiscal year. Since there is no feasible way to increase the available funds, our only choice is to decrease expenditures. The plan before you outlines feasible cuts that would yield savings of a billion dollars over the coming fiscal year. We will be able to solve the problem we face, therefore, only if we adopt this plan.

The reasoning in the commissioner's argument is flawed because this argument

- A. relies on information that is far from certain
- B. confuses being an adequate solution with being a required solution
- C. inappropriately relies on the opinions of experts
- D. inappropriately employs language that is vague
- E. takes for granted that there is no way to increase available funds

Correct Answer: B

We're looking for a flaw, and it's quite possible you sensed that the commissioner goes a little too far in her conclusion. Some organization or institution (we're not told who the poor saps are) is short a whopping billion dollars (so that's where all the petty cash went...). Funds cannot be increased, so the only way is to decrease outlays. Fair enough so far. Then a plan is introduced that will save, lo and behold, a billion dollars over the next year (no more free coffee in the company cafeteria?). So the problem can be solved ONLY if this plan is adopted. And there's where the commish overreaches. Just because this plan will save the billion, what evidence is provided that it is the only way to do so? Perhaps it is, but the commissioner gives no evidence to that effect, which she must do if she is going to claim that this is the ONLY way to solve the problem. Option [confuses being an adequate...] fancies this up a little, but says the same thing: The plan may be adequate, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it's required--that is, that nothing else could do the trick.

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**QUESTION 2**

Most scientists who study the physiological effects of alcoholic beverages have assumed that wine, like beer or distilled spirits, is a drink whose only active ingredient is alcohol. Because of this assumption, these scientists have rarely investigated the effects of wine as distinct from other forms of alcoholic beverages. Nevertheless, unlike other alcoholic beverages, wine has for centuries been thought to have healthful effects that these scientists—who not only make no distinction among wine, beer, and distilled spirits but also study only the excessive or abusive intake of these beverages—have obscured.

Recently, a small group of researchers has questioned this assumption and investigated the effects of moderate wine consumption. While alcohol has been shown conclusively to have negative physiological effects—for example, alcohol strongly affects the body's processing of lipids (fats and other substances including cholesterol), causing dangerous increases in the levels of these substances in the blood, increases that are a large contributing factor in the development of premature heart disease—the researchers found that absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream occurs much more slowly when subjects drink wine than when they drink distilled spirits. More remarkably, it was discovered that deaths due to premature heart disease in the populations of several European countries decreased dramatically as the incidence of moderate wine consumption increased. One preliminary study linked this effect to red wine, but subsequent research has shown identical results whether the wine was white or red. What could explain such apparently healthful effects?

For one thing, the studies show increased activity of a natural clot-breaking compound used by doctors to restore blood

flow through blocked vessels in victims of heart disease. In addition, the studies of wine drinkers indicate increased levels of certain compounds that may help to prevent damage from high lipid levels. And although the link between lipid processing and premature heart disease is one of the most important discoveries in modern medicine, in the past 20 years researchers have found several additional important contributing factors. We now know that endothelial cell reactivity (which affects the thickness of the innermost walls of blood vessels) and platelet adhesiveness (which influences the degree to which platelets cause blood to clot) are each linked to the development of premature heart disease. Studies show that wine appears to have ameliorating effects on both of these factors: it decreases the thickness of the innermost walls of blood vessels, and it reduces platelet adhesiveness. One study demonstrated a decrease in platelet adhesiveness among individuals who drank large amounts of grape juice. This finding may be the first step in confirming speculation that the potentially healthful effects of moderate wine intake may derive from the concentration of certain natural compounds found in grapes and not present in other alcoholic beverages.

In the first paragraph, the author most likely refers to the centuries-old belief that wine has healthful effects in order to

- A. demonstrate that discoveries in the realm of science often bear out popular beliefs
- B. provide evidence for the theory that moderate wine consumption ameliorates factors that contribute to premature heart disease
- C. argue that traditional beliefs are no less important than scientific evidence when investigating health matters
- D. suggest that a prevailing scientific assumption might be mistaken
- E. refute the argument that science should take cues from popular beliefs

Correct Answer: D

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### QUESTION 3

In our solar system only one of the nine planets-- Earth--qualifies as fit to sustain life. Nonetheless, using this ratio, and considering the astonishingly large number of planetary systems in the universe, we must conclude that the number of planets fit to sustain some form of life is extremely large.

The argument is questionable because it presumes which one of the following without providing justification?

- A. If a planet is Earth like, then life will arise on it.
- B. Our solar system is similar to many other planetary systems in the universe.
- C. The conditions necessary for life to begin are well understood.
- D. Life similar to Earth's could evolve under conditions very different from those on Earth.
- E. Most other planetary systems in the universe have nine planets.

Correct Answer: B

The stem tells us the argument is flawed, and even tells us the source of the problem: an unjustified assumption. So we'll bring all of our strategies for Flaw and Assumption questions to bear on the problem. The author concludes that there are a lot of planets able to sustain life, based on the fact that one out of the nine planets in our solar system sustains life, and there are a huge number of planetary systems in the universe. If, similar to our system, roughly one planet in each other system can sustain life, then this makes sense -- but what if this is not the case? What if the same ratio doesn't obtain out there in the far reaches of the universe? Then the conclusion would be unsupported. For the conclusion to stand, our solar system must be similar to many other systems (at least in this respect), and no evidence is provided to that effect.

**QUESTION 4**

Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions* is the most ambitious book on the history of science yet written from a feminist perspective, embracing not only the scientific construction of gender but also the interplay of race, class, and colonial and postcolonial culture with the "Western" construction of the very concept of nature itself. Primatology is a particularly apt vehicle for such themes because primates seem so much like ourselves that they provide ready material for scientists' conscious and unconscious projections of their beliefs about nature and culture.

Haraway's most radical departure is to challenge the traditional disjunction between the active knower (scientist/historian) and the passive object (nature/history). In Haraway's view, the desire to understand nature, whether in order to tame it or to preserve it as a place of wild innocence, is based on a troublingly masculinist and colonialist view of nature as an entity distinct from us and subject to our control. She argues that it is a view that is no longer politically, ecologically, or even scientifically viable. She proposes an approach that not only recognizes diverse human actors (scientists, government officials, laborers, science fiction writers) as contributing to our knowledge of nature, but that also recognizes the creatures usually subsumed under nature (such as primates) as active participants in creating that knowledge as well. Finally, she insists that the perspectives afforded by these different agents cannot be reduced to a single, coherent reality ?there are necessarily only multiple, interlinked, partial realities.

This iconoclastic view is reflected in Haraway's unorthodox writing style. Haraway does not weave the many different elements of her work into one unified, overarching Story of Primatology; they remain distinct voices that will not succumb to a master narrative. This fragmented approach to historiography is familiar enough in historiographical theorizing but has rarely been put into practice by historians of science. It presents a complex alternative to traditional history, whether strictly narrative or narrative with emphasis on a causal argument.

Haraway is equally innovative in the way she incorporates broad cultural issues into her analysis. Despite decades of rhetoric from historians of science about the need to unite issues deemed "internal" to science (scientific theory and practice) and those considered "external" to it (social issues, structures, and beliefs), that dichotomy has proven difficult to set aside. Haraway simply ignores it. The many readers in whom this separation is deeply ingrained may find her discussions of such popular sources as science fiction, movies, and television distracting, and her statements concerning such issues as nuclear war bewildering and digressive. To accept her approach one must shed a great many assumptions about what properly belongs to the study of science.

According to the author of the passage, which one of the following statements is true of the historiographical method employed by Haraway in *Primate Visions*?

- A. It is a particularly effective approach in discussions of social issues.
- B. It is an approach commonly applied in historiography in many disciplines.
- C. It is generally less effective than traditional approaches.
- D. It has rarely been used by historians emphasizing causal arguments.
- E. It has rarely been practiced by historians of science.

Correct Answer: E

Those who were dismayed at the author's use (twice!) of the unfamiliar word "historiography" should probably have been elated before. After all, it certainly tells you where the answer is likely to be found. (For the record, it's just a fancy term for the way in which history is told.) Anyway, if we read the 3rd paragraph carefully, we see that Haraway's method ?the use of "fragmented voices," the refusal to roll everything up into some unified whole ?is wellknown in theory, but not much put into practice by those telling the history of science.

**QUESTION 5**

Of the eight students -- George, Helen, Irving, Kyle, Lenore, Nina, Olivia, and Robert -- in a seminar, exactly six will give individual oral reports during three consecutive days -- Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Exactly two reports will be given each day -- one in the morning and one in the afternoon -- according to the following conditions:

Tuesday is the only day on which George can give a report.

Neither Olivia nor Robert can give an afternoon report. If Nina gives a report, then on the next day Helen and Irving must both give reports, unless Nina's report is given on Wednesday.

If George, Nina, and Robert give reports and they do so on different days from one another, which one of the following could be true?

- A. Helen gives a report on Wednesday.
- B. Nina gives a report on Monday.
- C. Nina gives a report on Tuesday.
- D. Olivia gives a report on Monday.
- E. Robert gives a report on Wednesday.

Correct Answer: A

The if clause identifies three of the 6 chosen reporters, and leaves it to us to (1) figure out as much as we can for certain, and (2) decide which of the five choices could be true. George is reporting, so he must take a Tuesday slot (Rule 1). Now, we don't know whether it's am or pm, but we do know (again, the question stem) that Nina and Robert appear on different days from each other and from George. Moreover, Nina cannot occupy a Monday slot here (because of Rule 3; for Nina to report on Monday she'd have to be followed by Helen + Irving on Tuesday, which is impossible now). So! Nina must take a Wednesday slot, and Robert will report on Monday morning (Rule 2). There's a lot left open, but we have shown that options [Helen gives a report on Wednesday], [Nina gives a report on Monday] and [Robert gives a report on Wednesday] are impossible (Nina's on Wednesday and Robert on Monday); and since Olivia, like Robert, is restricted to the am (Rule 2), Option [Olivia gives a report on Monday] is impossible as well. Option [Helen gives a report on Wednesday] is left over and must be correct. Indeed, Helen can share Wednesday with Nina.

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