



Identifying an Assumption

1. There is a higher than average risk of death or injury to young drivers and their passengers. In 2007, 32 per cent of car driver deaths and 40 per cent of car passenger deaths were people aged between 17 and 24. Young male drivers were much more likely to be killed or seriously injured than young female drivers. So in order to reduce the number of road accidents and the numbers of people killed or injured, young people should not be allowed to drive until they reach the age of 24.

Which one of the following is an assumption on which this argument depends?

- A Young people would not accept the raising of the legal driving age.
- B Most of the accidents involving young people were the fault of the young drivers.
- C The driving test does not effectively test the skill of drivers.
- D The majority of drivers aged between 17 and 24 drive dangerously.
- E Amongst drivers aged between 17 and 24 there are more male drivers than female drivers.

IMAT Q14 (2011)

2. Migratory birds which are unable to fly long distances without resting have to use the shortest distance over water in their flights to and from Africa, and so they cross at the Straits of Gibraltar. It is essential for these birds, some of which are very rare, that the route remains open. For that reason, it is important that plans to build electricity-generating wind farms on the hills surrounding the Straits of Gibraltar do not go ahead.

Which one of the following is an assumption on which this argument depends?

- A The birds that migrate across the Straits of Gibraltar are close to extinction.
- B Electricity-generating wind farms have to be built on hills.
- C The planned wind farms will make it dangerous for migratory birds to use their route.
- D Other species of bird can fly further and can thus use other routes in their migration.
- E There are no plans to build wind farms at other places along the coast.

IMAT Q26 (2011)



Identifying an Assumption

3. Many countries spent billions on vaccines in response to advice that a virus had the potential to kill millions. These countries are now trying to sell the stockpiles of vaccines which they do not need. There is concern that advice given by officials may have been influenced by pharmaceutical companies. Clearly, such companies would have an interest in making sure that governments spent large quantities of money on vaccines that they produced. It is essential that an investigation into this matter takes place as soon as possible so that those responsible can be held to account.

Which one of the following is an assumption on which this argument depends?

- A The pharmaceutical companies influenced the advice given by officials.
- B The advice given by officials was not appropriate.
- C It will not be possible for the stockpiles of vaccines to be sold.
- D The pharmaceutical companies misjudged the dangers of the virus.
- E Groups with financial interests do not advise officials in other areas of decision making.

IMAT Q38 (2011)

4. Television programmes that show young people in a school environment continue to feature highly in viewing schedules. Few of the programmes, however, give any emphasis on the time spent studying and the work required for academic success. Many of the actors used are far older than the characters they portray, suggesting attitudes, behaviour and appearances that are inaccurate and sometimes inappropriate. Broadcasters and producers should try to correct this.

Which one of the following must be assumed in the above argument?

- A Young people may feel that their social life is dull compared with that shown in television programmes.
- B It is often impractical to use young people in television programmes given the restrictions on how many hours they can work.
- C It is important to represent school life accurately.
- D Television programmes about other areas such as the police are not accurate.
- E School work and academic success are important to all students.

IMAT Q4 (2012)



Identifying an Assumption

5.

Global warming is threatening the survival of California's redwoods. These trees benefit from coastal fog which is captured by the trees, causing water to drip onto the soil and therefore watering them. Since fog is now 30 percent less frequent than it was 50 years ago the trees will not have this source of water and are therefore likely to begin to die out.

Which one of the following must be assumed in the above argument?

- A Global warming is to blame for the reduction in coastal fog.
- B The levels of fog will continue to decline.
- C Other trees will not be able to thrive in these conditions.
- D Redwoods in other areas of the world are being similarly affected.
- E Rainfall has also reduced over the past 50 years.

IMAT Q14 (2012)

6.

It has been argued that since there has to be some limit on the funding of university education by governments, it would be best to target such funding, giving a lower priority to subjects which provide little benefit to society. Some subjects, such as Medicine, Engineering and Computing should be well funded, because they are clearly of great worth to the community. Subjects such as Classics, Literature and Art should be funded at a much lower level. These subjects are primarily of interest to the individual, and a wealthy society should give some subsidy to hobby subjects. However, it must be recognised that the future of society lies in the training and development of those people who will contribute the most.

Which one of the following must be assumed in the above argument?

- A Subjects which are of interest to individuals can also provide benefit to society.
- B The training of those people who will contribute most to society requires an increase in government funding in university education.
- C Medicine, Engineering and Computing are not very interesting subjects to study.
- D A wealthy society should not subsidise subjects which are of interest only to individuals.
- E The study at universities of Classics, Literature and Art provides little benefit to society.

IMAT Q20 (2012)



Identifying an Assumption

7. It has recently been suggested that some degrees can be completed in two years instead of the traditional three years. But staff teaching engineering and medicine at degree level say that the current first year mostly involves getting students up to a common level of maths and physics, which in the past was achieved by high school teaching. By the end of the second year few students have reached the level of attainment that students did 40 years ago. Two year degrees are not realistic - certainly not for engineering.

Which one of the following is an assumption of the argument in the passage above?

- A Two year degree courses will have the same amount of teaching per year as three year courses.
- B School examinations are easier now than they were 40 years ago.
- C Maths and physics are more important elements of engineering than they were 40 years ago.
- D Engineering students are less motivated than they were 40 years ago.
- E Two year degree courses will be more popular with students than three year courses.

IMAT Q20 (2013)

8. Horrific images of the earthquake in Haiti were seen immediately all over the world, and by the next day the full extent of the damage was seen by the entire world. Clearly, the main problem was moving aid from the airport to distant areas, and with the roads largely blocked the only practical method was to use helicopters. The great nations of the world should be ashamed that food was not getting to the people who needed it, and that even a week later their relief still depended on the ability of courageous and skillful drivers to reach them in trucks.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the argument above?

- A The relief agencies were able to import trucks to Haiti but not helicopters.
- B The great nations of the world had helicopters at their disposal which could reach Haiti within a week.
- C There was enough food in Haiti to supply all the people in the weeks after the earthquake.
- D The images failed to prompt the great nations of the world into relief operations after the earthquake.
- E The people of Haiti were able to clear their roads within a week of the earthquake.

IMAT Q30 (2013)



Identifying an Assumption

9. When driving, if the car in front of you brakes suddenly, you need to be able to stop without crashing into it. The easiest rule-of-thumb is the two second rule. You choose a reference point that the vehicle in front of you is passing then say aloud: 'Only a fool breaks the two second rule'. If you reach the reference point before you have finished the saying you need to pull back. This works at all speeds. However, when there are adverse road conditions or the road is narrow you need to double your braking distance. These practices will enable you to avoid such crashes.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the argument above?

- A Adopting the 'two second rule' will avoid all accidents.
- B Most crashes are caused by cars running into the car in front.
- C Those who do not use the rule do not value road safety.
- D Some drivers brake more suddenly than others.
- E It will not take less than two seconds to repeat the saying.

IMAT Q4 (2014)

10. Smoking cigarettes causes a speeding up in the rate of blood flow, which in turn increases the risk of heart disease. It was thought that this speeding up of blood flow was caused solely by the gas carbon monoxide, which is absorbed during smoking, and not by nicotine, which is also absorbed from the smoke in the lungs. However, tests have shown that using nicotine patches (from which nicotine is absorbed through the skin) or chewing nicotine gum also causes the rate of blood flow to increase. This shows that the nicotine in cigarettes is also responsible for the increased risk of heart disease among smokers.

Which one of the following is **not** an assumption of the argument in the passage above?

- A Any differences between the amount of nicotine absorbed from smoking and the amount absorbed from nicotine patches and chewing gum can be disregarded.
- B Carbon monoxide is not absorbed from nicotine patches and nicotine chewing gum.
- C Carbon monoxide would not produce a rise in the rate of blood flow in the absence of nicotine.
- D The effect of nicotine on the body does not depend on the way in which it was absorbed.
- E There is nothing else in nicotine patches and chewing gum which might cause an increase in the rate of blood flow.

IMAT Q18 (2014)



Identifying an Assumption

11.

Studies are taking place to assess the benefits to dental health of adding fluoride to drinking water, a process known as mass medication. The Health Minister has urged consideration of fluoridation, particularly in deprived areas where dental care is poor. Fluoride can occur naturally in the water because of fluoride containing minerals. Fluoride, if in the water, improves dental health by up to 50 percent. Even so, fluoridation should not take place. A campaign leader opposed to fluoridation has spoken of her experiences of living in a fluoridated area of the USA. She experienced feelings of apathy and depression; her 2 year old son showed autistic tendencies and had white flecks on his teeth. These symptoms disappeared when they returned home from the USA.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the argument above?

- A Mass medication is always wrong.
- B Fluoridation of water is a person's only source of fluoride.
- C The reported health symptoms were caused by fluoride in the water.
- D Fluoridation is cheaper than improving dental facilities.
- E Fluoridation is only necessary in deprived areas.

IMAT Q7 (2015)

12.

Climate scientists in Greenland studying patterns of plant growth have suggested that the early arrival of spring in the Arctic threatens to drive down populations of migrating animals such as caribou. However, comparable studies elsewhere show that their fears are unfounded. A recent study of great tits in Oxfordshire showed the birds are capable of adapting to climate change better than many scientists expected. Over the past half century, the birds have brought forward the date they lay their eggs by two weeks, so that young are born when plant-eating grubs are most plentiful.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the above argument?

- A Migrating animals in the Arctic can adapt to climate change as successfully as great tits in Oxfordshire.
- B Birds are more adaptable than large mammals such as caribou.
- C Unless animals like the caribou produce their young earlier in the year, their population will fall.
- D The scientists working in Oxfordshire have greater expertise than those working in Greenland.
- E Climate change in Greenland and climate change in Oxfordshire are of the same scale.

IMAT Q10 (2015)



Identifying an Assumption

13. Few linguists would argue against the view that our first language is acquired and not learned. Pre-school children do not study their native tongue nor do they learn grammar rules but, by the time they start school at the age of five or six, the vast majority are competent users of their language. Therefore, when learning a second or additional language, studying grammar is a waste of time and all that is required is exposure to the target language in order to acquire competency in its use.

Which one of the following identifies the underlying assumption of the above argument?

- A Only people who know how to read can learn a second or additional language.
- B Languages are fundamentally different from one another.
- C Children are better at acquiring languages than adults.
- D Learners of second or additional languages should read the target language.
- E Acquiring a second or additional language is the same process as acquiring a first language.

IMAT Q9 (2016)

14. The recently-appointed captain of the national football team has been publicly accused of adultery with several women, including the girlfriend of a former teammate. The newspapers have made a great deal of his extramarital activities and it has become a scandal. His behaviour has led him to be the subject of crude jokes. He has now been suspended from his duties. It is right that he has been removed from his position so that the team can start to pull together and have the best possible chance of winning the World Cup.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the above argument?

- A The new captain's actions have weakened team morale.
- B This new captain should not have been appointed.
- C If the new captain is fired, the national team will win the World Cup.
- D The national team will not win the World Cup.
- E Newspapers have the right to report on people's personal lives.

IMAT Q12 (2017)



Identifying an Assumption

15. Many banks encourage their customers to buy insurance against credit card fraud and other kinds of 'identity theft'. But the banks are really protecting themselves. Customers who are victims of credit card fraud suffer inconvenience but they are unlikely to lose money: the costs of any fraudulent transactions are met by the bank. It is therefore unnecessary for customers to spend money on additional insurance services.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the above argument?

- A Customers whose identities have been stolen would have benefited from the banks' additional insurance services.
- B Additional insurance services are widely available for credit card customers.
- C The banks' additional insurance services protect only against the costs of fraudulent credit card transactions.
- D People who are worried about identity theft worry only about their credit cards.
- E Credit card fraud is a less serious problem than many people believe.

IMAT Q16 (2017)

16. 'Internet addiction' is about to be classified as a recognised psychiatric disorder. Internet addiction is characterised by a number of signs: excessive use of the internet; anger or depression if access is lost; isolation from friends and family; and, most significantly, poor educational achievement. This should make us cautious about incorporating computer-based learning into all aspects of education. Educationalists should consider the long-term problems associated with extensive internet use as well as its immediate attractions.

Which one of the following is an assumption of the above argument?

- A All computer-based learning includes internet use.
- B Students are unable to regulate their internet use.
- C It is a bad idea to incorporate computer-based learning into education.
- D Classifying internet addiction as a recognised psychiatric disorder will help lead to a cure.
- E Excessive internet use is the only cause of poor educational achievement.

IMAT Q20 (2018)

Identifying an
Assumption

17.

Researchers have tried to establish reasons for a recent drop in the catch of marlin near the Madeira coast. This drop cannot be explained by environmental conditions; there was no significant change in the temperature or composition of the region's water. Nor could one blame the human factor, because the size of the fishing fleet, catch quotas and pollution levels have been strictly observed. The environmentalists then analysed the records of the fishing catch of marlin over the last six centuries. This research identified that regular five-year periods of significant decrease in the catch alternated with fifteen-year periods of gradual growth of the catch. In view of this, the study concluded that the current drop in the marlin catch is part of a long-term cycle related to fish migration and food-chain balance.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the above argument?

- A There is no correlation between the fishing catch today and the deep-sea stock of marlin in the sixteenth century.
- B The fishing catch of marlin around Madeira does not depend on the condition of the water around the island.
- C Climate change did not affect the temperature of ocean water off the Madeira coast.
- D The change in fishing technology has affected the change in the fishing catch.
- E The records provide accurate information about the catch of marlin off the Madeira coast.

IMAT Q10 (2019)