



Flaw Questions

1. While the Internet brings undoubted advantages to young people, the effects of excessive use are serious. Some teenagers are spending as much as 8 hours per day using the Internet. Isolation and obesity are increasing amongst children. Parents must enforce stricter controls over their children, to make sure that the Internet is not causing their children to have long term physical and emotional ill health.

Which **one** of the following best expresses the flaw in the above argument?

- A It understates the benefits of Internet usage.
- B It focuses only on teenagers who spend 8 hours per day using the Internet.
- C It assumes that parents can enforce stricter controls.
- D It says nothing about the effects of watching TV and using computer games.
- E It assumes that excessive Internet use causes isolation and obesity.

BMAT Q14 (2003)

Here, the answer is C.

Statement C is correct here because the paragraph states that the solution of internet overuse in children lies with parents imposing stricter controls over their children. The best flaw is that we are assuming that parents can enforce stricter controls in order to decrease the use and thus prevent long term physical and emotional poor health. This is summarised in statement C.



2.

At 11 years old, the children of parents who smoke are shorter on average than the children of parents who do not smoke. Therefore, parental smoking tends to reduce the growth rate of children up to 11 years old.

Which **one** of the following explains what is wrong with this argument?

- A By 18 years old the children of parents who smoke might be the same size, on average, as the children of parents who do not smoke.
- B Lower average heights in 11 year olds may be associated with parental smoking, but not caused by it.
- C Children of smokers may be shorter on average at 11 years old, but this does not mean that all children of smokers are shorter than all children of non-smokers at this age.
- D Even though they are shorter, the children of parents who smoke might be better developed in other ways than the children of non-smokers.

BMAT Q28 (2003)

Here, the answer is B.

The paragraph assumes that **parental smoking** in children up to the age of 11 years old is the root cause for reduced growth rates. However, this is incorrect because it does not account for other factors that may be causing shorter heights in children up to the age of 11 years old.



Flaw Questions

3.

The government now insists that all primary schools spend at least one hour per day on literacy and numeracy work, and stipulate that a substantial part of the time is spent in whole class teaching. These changes have helped to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Therefore, whole class teaching is clearly more beneficial than small group or individual work.

Which of the following best expresses the flaw in the argument in the passage?

- A It assumes that the teaching method is the cause of the improved standards.
- B It ignores the additional work teachers have had to take on.
- C It assumes that literacy and numeracy were low before the changes.
- D It relies on short term measurements of improvement.
- E It overlooks the benefits of small group and individual work.

BMAT Q4 (2004)

Here, the answer is A.

Statement A is correct here because the passage concludes that whole class teaching is superior to small group teaching. Therefore it assumes that the improvement in raised standards in literacy and numeracy is due to the teaching style rather than making one hour of literacy and numeracy work mandatory. This is summarised in statement A. Statements B-E are incorrect because there is no mention of this in the passage.



Flaw Questions

4.

"Farmers are often criticised for their heavy use of pesticides, which has had a harmful effect not only on many species of wildlife, but, it is alleged, on people who live near farms where pesticides have been sprayed. And yet the fault does not lie with farmers. People choose supermarkets according to price. Supermarkets compete for our business and so bring prices down to gain our business. Farmers are therefore forced to sell their produce at increasingly lower costs, and therefore need to maximise their yield or make a loss at the prices supermarkets demand. Therefore people do not have the right to complain about farmers' use of pesticides."

Which of the following is a flaw in the above argument?

- A The argument has confused objections to the manner of use of pesticides with the use in general.
- B The argument contradicts itself by saying that pesticides damage the environment but also that they help maximise yield.
- C It assumes that the use of pesticides is the only way to avoid making a loss.
- D Farmers sometimes sell their produce direct to the public at farmers' markets.
- E There is no proof that people who live near farms have been affected by pesticides.

BMAT Q18 (2006)

Here, the answer is C.

Statement C is correct because the last statement assumes that in order for farmers to maximise their yield to avoid making a loss is with the use of pesticides as it summarises that people have to stop complaining about the use of pesticides in farms.

Statement A is incorrect because the passage is clear with how farmers use pesticides in that they are primarily used to increase produce yield.

Statement B is not a flaw of the overarching argument that the only way that yield can increase is through the use of pesticides.

Statement D & E are both incorrect because there is no mention of this in the passage.



Flaw Questions

5.

Data from a Swedish census shows that at age 64 those who have a PhD are less likely to die within the next year than are those who have only a BA or a BSc. The census showed further evidence of the relationship between level of educational attainment and longevity, since those aged 64 with an MA (higher than a BA and lower than a PhD) were less likely to die within the next year than those with a BA and more likely to die within the next year than those with a PhD. So it's clear that someone who is awarded a PhD in Sweden will live longer than they would have done if they had not studied for a higher degree.

Which one of the following identifies a flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that what is true for a group is true for each individual.
- B It assumes that people who are awarded PhDs will have a healthier lifestyle.
- C It assumes that what applies in Sweden will apply in other countries.
- D It assumes that in Sweden only the healthiest people are awarded PhDs.

BMAT Q16 (2007)

Here, the answer is A.

Statement A is correct because the passage is only looking at a select group of people who have studied rather than those who have not studied at all. It is also fair to say that it has not taken into account everybody who studied a higher education degree at university and then studied their longevity. Therefore, it is fair to say that the flaw in the argument is that it is extrapolating information based off of a group of people and applying it generally to all individuals. This is summarised in statement A.

Statement B is incorrect because it is evidence to the conclusion of the passage rather than a flaw. It is fair to say that a healthier lifestyle goes hand in hand with longevity but this cannot be said for certain.

Statement C is incorrect because this Swedish study is applying the data to those who have completed degrees in Sweden rather than applying the study results to other countries.

Statement D is incorrect because the passage only states that people who have completed PhDs are more likely to live longer rather than the other way around.



Flaw Questions

6.

Young children who sleep with a light on may have a substantially higher risk of developing nearsightedness as a result, says a new study in the journal *Nature*.

The collaborative study of 479 children by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center and The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia found 55 percent of children who slept with a room light on before age 2 had myopia, or nearsightedness, between ages 2 and 16.

Of the children who slept with a night-light before age 2, 34 percent were myopic, while just 10 percent of children who slept in darkness were nearsighted.

Which one of the following, if true, gives a reason why the above argument might be flawed?

- A A later study showed that myopic parents are more likely to leave children's lights on than those without myopia.
- B The study did not follow the subjects into adulthood.
- C American children are more prone to developing myopia than those from other parts of the world.
- D Few children in the third world, where there are few electric lights, wear glasses.

BMAT Q28 (2007)

Here, the answer is A.

Statement A is correct here because it provides another possible reason for children to develop myopia. The statement suggests the potential genetic link that myopic parents have children that develop myopia. This challenges the link between leaving a night light on and the risk of developing myopia in children. It is therefore a flaw to the argument if presumed correct.

Statements B-D do not directly challenge the link between leaving a night light on and the chance of developing myopia if they were presumed correct.



Flaw Questions

7.

The implementation this year of more random speed traps to prevent accidents is absurd. Figures published earlier this year showed that only 6 % of accidents are caused by speeding. But half the deaths on the roads are caused by drivers under 25. The road safety campaigners should turn their attention to finding ways of helping young people to drive safely while they are gaining experience, instead of advocating the pursuit of safe and responsible drivers for technical infringements of arbitrary limits.

Which of the following could be flaws in the argument?

- 1 The writer ignores the fact that the introduction of more random speed traps, though not focusing on the most common cause of accidents, is still designed to prevent them.
 - 2 The writer ignores the fact that a percentage of deaths caused by drivers under the age of 25 will be due to speeding.
 - 3 The writer fails to appreciate the fact that safe and responsible driving includes obeying the speed limit.
- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C 3 only
- D 1 and 2 only
- E 1 and 3 only

BMAT Q30 (2008)

Here, the answer is E .

P1: 6% accidents are caused by speeding

P2: Half the deaths on the roads are caused by drivers >25.

C1: Road safety campaigners should focus on helping young people to drive safely rather than the current action taken.

Statement 1: This is a flaw because the argument focusses on just fixing the 'main' causes deaths.

Statement 2: We cannot assume this and it is not written in the text.

Statement 3: This is a flaw as there is a gap between P2 and C1. The passage assumes that the only way someone can be a 'safe and responsible' driver is by preventing themselves committing road deaths.



Flaw Questions

8.

For there to be life elsewhere in the universe, there would have to be planets similar to Earth, i.e. small, rocky planets orbiting at the right distance from their star to ensure that they are not so hot that water boils and not so cold that it remains frozen. Until now techniques have not been sensitive enough to detect such planets. The new Kepler telescope is so sensitive that for the first time astronomers will be able to see if there are Earth-sized planets in the 'habitable zone' of their stars - the region where the temperature is right for liquid water to exist at the surface. So if the Kepler telescope finds that such planets exist, we can at last be confident that there is life on planets other than Earth.

Which of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that Earth-sized planets will have life forms similar to those on Earth.
- B It assumes that the existence of Earth-sized planets in the 'habitable zone' is sufficient for life to exist.
- C It assumes that the Kepler telescope will find Earth-sized planets in the 'habitable zone' of their stars.
- D It assumes that it is necessary to have highly sensitive equipment to detect the existence of planets.
- E It assumes that the presence of liquid water on a planet is not sufficient for life to exist.

BMAT Q28 (2009)

Here, the answer is B.

P1: For there to be life elsewhere, planets need to be similar to Earth.

P2: Kepler telescope is sensitive to detect planets in the habitable zone.

C1: If such a planet is found, we can be sure that there is life on planets other than Earth.

The main flaw here is the gap between P2 and C1 is that being in the habitable zone is the only requirement for life. A is not mentioned. C and D are not assumptions made in the passage. E is false.



9. Societies with a flourishing arts sector (including visual art, theatre, music and dance) tend to be more democratic, more egalitarian, economically more robust and to have more fulfilled, healthier citizens. So, if we want to live in the most democratic, egalitarian and economically robust society, we should demand that the Government subsidises the arts to a level which enables them to flourish.

Which one of the following illustrates a flaw in the above argument?

- A There may be other important demands on government money.
- B A flourishing arts sector may influence citizens' psychological health.
- C A strong economy may be a precondition of a flourishing arts sector.
- D Some of the arts (for example, opera) may be seen as non-egalitarian.

BMAT Q2 (2010)

Here, the answer is C.

P1: Societies with a flourishing art sector are more democratic, egalitarian and economically robust.

C1: To become democratic, egalitarian and economically robust we should ask the Government to subsidise the art sector.

The main flaw here is that the passage assumes that democracy, equality and economic robustness is a result of a flourishing art sector. A is irrelevant. B and D are not mentioned in the passage.



Flaw Questions

10.

As examination results come out again there will undoubtedly be concerns about the state of the education system. If the results are good then we will hear that the examinations are becoming too easy. On the other hand, if the results are poor, then we will hear about the poor state of funding for the education sector. Since there will be negative stories in the press either way, we should ignore these stories and not worry about them.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

- A The options are restricted to the results being either good or bad.
- B It makes an unwarranted attack on the press.
- C It makes a prediction about the future which is not supported by any evidence.
- D It fails to establish that examinations are becoming easier.
- E The fact that a negative story is inevitable does not mean that it should be ignored.

BMAT Q13 (2010)

Here, the answer is E.

P1: There will be negative stories in the press either way.

C1: We should ignore the stories.

A is not a flaw in the argument as the results can only be seen as good or bad. B is irrelevant. C is false, the passage is not making a prediction. D is irrelevant. E is therefore the flaw because it pinpoints the gap between P1 and C1.



Flaw Questions

11.

When defending the British Museum's stance on holding on to important historical artefacts that were taken from other countries, the tale of the Standard of Ur offers a huge case in support of the policy. Had Britain returned it to Iraq, it would have been lost along with so much of the country's history when the national museum was looted. Consequently, it would have been lost to all of us. By keeping these treasures at the British Museum, their safety is ensured for the whole world.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the argument?

- A An artefact taken from another country has technically already been looted.
- B An artefact taken from another country will always belong to that country.
- C Because one museum overseas is looted it does not mean that others will be.
- D If the British Museum returned all the artefacts to their homes, more people from other countries would get the chance to see them.
- E Because the Standard of Ur is safe it doesn't mean all other artefacts are safe.

BMAT Q17 (2010)

Here, the answer is C.

The passage concludes that had Britain returned artefacts back to Iraq, they would have been lost along the a lot of the country's history, when the natural history museum was looted. Therefore, to prevent the looting that other countries experienced, Britain should hold on to its historical artefacts for the whole world to enjoy.

The conclusion is flawed as it assumes that because other countries museums were looted, that the same would happen to Britain. Therefore, statement C is correct.

All other statements are not relevant to the main conclusion and do not directly flaw it.



Flaw Questions

12.

When children are young they often play games. These games are useful as they teach children how to interact with each other. In recent years the growth of computer games has meant that now many children play most of their games on computers and across the internet. Thus the way in which children interact with each other has changed. When these children grow up they will need to work in jobs that require interaction with co-workers. The increased popularity of computer games is therefore going to mean that they are less likely to be able to function socially within their workplace.

Which one of the following is a flaw in the above argument?

- A It ignores the benefits that are brought by the internet, such as easy access to more information.
- B It does not consider that games on a computer can teach many other skills as it is possible for their rules to be more complex.
- C It does not consider the fact that adults also play computer games.
- D It is restricted to just one negative aspect of computer games.
- E It does not establish that children who play computer games no longer interact with each other.

BMAT Q4 (2011)

Here, the answer is E.

P1: Children used to play games with each other.

P2: Nowadays, many children play most of their games on the computer.

P3: The children will grow up and do jobs that require interaction with co-workers.

C1: Children are going to be less likely to be able to function socially within their workplace.

There is a gap between P2 and C1 as the passage doesn't clarify if playing more video games has reduced time spent playing games with each other. A,B,C are irrelevant.



Flaw Questions

13.

It has been celebrated recently that hydrogen fuelled buses are being introduced into London. This is because the use of hydrogen as a fuel is better for the environment as there are no emissions of carbon dioxide. The new buses carry the same number of passengers and will be travelling exactly the same routes as the ones that they are replacing. However, commercially sold hydrogen is produced from natural gas. The process to produce one tonne of hydrogen from natural gas puts, on average, eight tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, whereas the production of fuel for the existing buses does not emit any carbon dioxide. The further costs of transporting the fuel to the bus depot also need to be considered. We should therefore not welcome the introduction of these buses.

Given that the following extra information is available:

- 1 The distance that each type of bus can travel using one tonne of fuel.
- 2 The distance that each bus needs to travel every week.
- 3 The amount of carbon dioxide emitted when the existing buses use one tonne of fuel.
- 4 For each type of fuel, the amount of carbon dioxide emitted in transporting one tonne of fuel to the bus depot.

Which of the pieces of information **would** we need to know in order to determine whether or not the argument is flawed?

- A 1, 2 and 3 only
- B 1, 2 and 4 only
- C 1, 3 and 4 only
- D 2, 3 and 4 only
- E 1, 2, 3 and 4

BMAT Q28 (2011)

Here, the answer is C.

Statement 1: This will allow us to evaluate the relative efficiency of the two types of buses.

Statement 2: As they are using the same routes, we know that the same amount of distance will be travelled by both.

Statement 3: Again, this will allow us to compare relative efficiency and therefore whether the argument is flawed.

Statement 4: This information will let us evaluate the efficiency of transportation the fuel.



Flaw Questions

14.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has released data from a study of 15 year olds in the principal industrialised countries. It shows unequivocally that teenage students whose parents discuss political or social issues with them, either weekly or daily, score 28 points higher at reading (on average) than those whose parents discuss these issues less often or not at all. Other factors were also associated with better reading ability: discussing books or television programmes, eating main meals together at a table and spending time talking to children. Discussing news and serious issues showed the strongest association, so if parents spend time discussing these issues with their children they will help their children read well.

Which of the following best expresses the flaw in the argument above?

- A It implies that discussing serious issues with parents is more influential than discussion with a peer group.
- B It assumes that eating meals together at a table is practical in all households.
- C It fails to consider teenagers in rural countries.
- D It does not show why reading ability is so important in a teenager's development.
- E It suggests a causal relationship between discussion and reading.

BMAT Q6 (2012)

Here, the answer is E.

C1: if parents spend time discussing these issues with their children they will help their children read well.

This is a correlation not causation type flaw. The argument suggests a direct link between discussion and reading ability. A, B, C are irrelevant and in the case of A and C, the facts in the statements are not mentioned in the text. D is not a feasible flaw based on the argument.



Flaw Questions

15.

Perfect pitch – the ability to identify any note of music without inferring it from a reference note – is usually found to be a characteristic only of people who were taught music before the age of 6. So teaching music to children under the age of 6 should become a priority in primary schools. This could mean that in the future the majority of the population would have perfect pitch.

Which one of the following describes a flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that adults could acquire perfect pitch if they were taught music.
- B It ignores the possibility that other factors may be necessary for acquiring perfect pitch.
- C It assumes that having perfect pitch is necessary for success as a musician.
- D It ignores the possibility that children under the age of 6 may not enjoy learning music.

BMAT Q6 (2014)

Here, the answer is B.

Structurally, this is a very straightforward argument. It only contains three claims, and the second one, clearly signalled with 'So', is evidently a conclusion. (As previously stated, words like 'however,' 'so', 'therefore', 'hence' or 'consequently' and phrases such as 'as a result of this' often indicate that a conclusion is being drawn.)

The passage assumes that being taught music before the age of 6 is the only necessary factor in order to have a perfect pitch. The argument however fails to recognise the possibility of other factors that may be necessary for acquiring a perfect pitch. This is summarised in statement B, representing a suitable flaw for the above argument.

Statement A is incorrect because the passage argues that in order to acquire a perfect pitch, music must be taught before the age of 6. Therefore, it does not assume adults could acquire a perfect pitch if they were taught music.

Statement C is incorrect because there is no mention of the success of musicians.

Statement D is irrelevant as there is no mention of children enjoying the music and how this could affect the acquisition of a perfect pitch.



16.

We are all becoming used to warnings of a shortage of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) recruits. In a world increasingly dominated by careers that involve these fields, organisations and politicians repeatedly state that we really must train more of these people to secure our prosperity. But STEM training is not the only answer: anecdotal evidence shows that the STEM employees who do best are those most skilled in thinking and communicating. Instead of looking to produce scientists or engineers, we should focus on turning out agile minds. The ability to process, synthesise and communicate information efficiently is the premium skill of the future.

Which one of the following best expresses the flaw in the argument above?

- A It assumes that being agile-minded cannot be taught.
- B It ignores the fact that STEM courses are growing in popularity.
- C It fails to use comparative data from other countries.
- D It assumes that agile minds are equally effective with or without STEM training.
- E It ignores the views of STEM employers.

BMAT Q17 (2014)

Here, the answer is D.

P1: organisations and politicians repeatedly state that we really must train more of these people in STEM subjects to secure our prosperity.

P2: STEM employees who do best are those most skilled in thinking and communicating

C1: we should focus on turning out agile minds, instead of engineers and scientists.

The gap between P2 and C1 is that the argument fails to recognise that STEM training is probably a contributor to producing an 'agile mind.'



Flaw Questions

17.

Recent research has found a surprising correlation between how women rate the physical attractiveness of male competitive cyclists and their overall performance in an endurance race, with those competitors rated most attractive finishing ahead of those rated less attractive. It seems that women are sensitive to those physical traits that relate to cycling excellence and unwittingly factor this into how attractive they find a particular participant. Therefore it would follow that attractive male film stars and models are likely to make successful cyclists.

Which one of the following best expresses the flaw in the above passage?

- A The study did not suggest attractiveness alone is sufficient to ensure success.
- B A false impression of sporting excellence has been put forward.
- C The results of this study may not be generalisable to all sports.
- D The study wrongly suggests that cyclists are more attractive than other sportsmen.
- E The findings of this study may not be repeated in the future.

BMAT Q4 (2015)

Here, the answer is A.

P1: Those competitors rated most attractive finished ahead of those rated less attractive in cycling.

P2: It seems that women are sensitive to those physical traits that relate to cycling excellence and unwittingly factor this into how attractive they find a particular participant.

C1: Attractive male film stars and models are likely to make successful cyclists.

The gap between P1 and C1 forms the basis of the flaw in the argument. The passage suggests that being attractive is the only variable to succeeding in a cycling race.



18.

The rate of recorded heart attacks among women in the UK could soon start to fall because a new blood test has been developed which provides a more accurate diagnosis of the incidence of heart attacks in women. Researchers believe that heart attacks in women may previously have been under-diagnosed because the 'old' blood test was not sufficiently sensitive. They believe that possibly twice as many women will be found using the new test to have had heart attacks as were found using the old one. With more accurate diagnosis, women can start treatment to reduce the risk of a further attack.

Which one of the following best expresses the flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that the lower number of subsequent heart attacks will not be balanced by the higher recording of first heart attacks.
- B It assumes that the same new blood test can be used equally well for men as for women.
- C It assumes that a blood test is the only way of diagnosing when a heart attack has taken place.
- D It assumes that treatment to prevent subsequent heart attacks is always effective.
- E It assumes that women are likely to seek medical help more quickly than men.

BMAT Q17 (2015)

Here, the answer is A.

If a test is more sensitive, it means it will pick up cases of heart attacks that were previously missed. The argument suggests that the development of a new blood test will reduce the rate of recorded heart attacks in women. The argument is therefore flawed as the number of recorded heart attacks will ultimately increase.



Flaw Questions

19.

When we listen to music, electrical waves in our brains tend to synchronise to the tempo. In a recent study scientists recorded the brain waves of musicians and non-musicians as they listened to music. Although the brain waves of both groups synchronised to many rhythms, those of non-musicians did not synchronise to particularly slow music. The non-musicians reported that they could not keep track of the tempo in slow music. This shows that becoming a musician requires an innate tendency for the brain to synchronise to the tempo of any speed of music.

Which one of the following identifies a flaw in the above argument?

- A The tempo of slow music may be the most difficult tempo for listeners to follow.
- B Musical training may develop the tendency for the brain to synchronise to music.
- C Some of the non-musicians may decide to undertake musical training in the future.
- D Becoming a musician may depend on a number of different abilities.

BMAT Q4 (2016)

Here, the answer is B.

This argument makes the assumption that the brain's ability to synchronise to the tempo of any speed of music is a prerequisite to becoming a good musician. It doesn't consider that those who are musicians may have developed that skill as they practised more. In A, we cannot make this assumption. C is irrelevant. D is correct but it doesn't not pin point the flaw in this argument.



Flaw Questions

20.

The sale of self-help books that claim to reveal the secret of happiness generated \$10 billion in 2009. But if you want to become more contented with life, you shouldn't read these books, because reading them will have the opposite effect. Researchers at the University of Montreal found that those who had read such books were more likely to be anxious and depressed than those who had never read them.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

- A Becoming more contented with life may be an unrealistic goal.
- B Being anxious and depressed may prompt people to read self-help books.
- C Some of those who have never read self-help books may be anxious and depressed.
- D Some people who are anxious and depressed may never read self-help books.

BMAT Q26 (2016)

Here, the answer is B.

This argument also makes a direct link between two factors, claiming that reading the self help books will cause anxiety and depression, when actually it could be the other way around. Statement A is irrelevant. C and D may be correct but not the are not a flaw in the presented argument.



Flaw Questions

21.

People wonder whether or not machines could ever become conscious, but it's obvious that one day they will. After all, if consciousness is just the result of the working of the brain, and if the brain is just a complicated machine, then what's to stop machines becoming complex enough to be conscious? Every year machines get more and more complex. It's only a matter of time before they acquire consciousness.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

- A It is impossible for a machine ever to become conscious.
- B The argument does not specify what 'a matter of time' entails.
- C The argument confuses science fiction with the reality of technological progress.
- D The argument depends on unwarranted claims about the mind and the brain.

BMAT Q30 (2016)

Here, the answer is D.

P1: Consciousness is just the result of the working of the brain

P2: Brain is just a complicated machine

C1: It's only a matter of time before machines acquire consciousness.

The argument has no supporting evidence which corroborates its claims. According to info in the passage, we don't know if A is correct. B and C are irrelevant.



Flaw Questions

22. Researchers have found that middle-aged men with bigger waist measurements have an increased risk of developing prostate cancer. They found that, for every extra ten centimetres a man had on his waist, his risk of developing the most aggressive form of prostate cancer was raised by 13 per cent. Early results suggest the increased risk is linked with the disruption to testosterone and other hormones that occurs with weight gain. This shows that middle-aged men can prevent the development of prostate cancer by eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise.

Which one of the following best expresses a flaw in the above argument?

- A It ignores the fact that weight gain is a factor in other forms of cancer.
- B It assumes that major changes to diet and exercise are achievable by all men.
- C It assumes that losing weight is sufficient to avoid developing prostate cancer.
- D It fails to note the role of hormone disruption in other forms of cancer.

BMAT Q6 (2017)

Here, the answer is C.

The argument gives a very narrow line of reasoning, focussing only on preventing weight gain. However, it doesn't consider that the weight gain could be a result of other things such as genetics etc. The argument also suggests that losing weight is sufficient in the prevention of cancer. A and B are irrelevant. Other forms of cancer aren't discussed here, so it cannot be D.



Flaw Questions

23.

We often hear about childhood stars having breakdowns in later life. Celebrity gossip magazines regularly feature stories revelling in the decline of a once innocent and adored child actor into a troubled twenty-something going through painful relationship break-ups and battles with drug addictions. Their fate is inevitable given the moral bankruptcy of show business: the industry is steeped in sex, alcohol and drugs. Parents choosing to expose their children to these evils at such a vulnerable age must take the blame for their struggles with them in later life. Given the lasting damage, I would argue that it is actually child abuse to place a minor into such an environment. As part of our policy of child protection, it should be illegal to let your child work in show business.

Which of the following expresses a flaw in the above argument?

- 1 Break-ups and mental breakdowns do not occur only to childhood stars; they can happen to anyone.
 - 2 Being adored as a child is not an adequate explanation for addictions or broken relationships in later life.
- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C both 1 and 2
- D neither 1 nor 2



BMAT Q17 (2017)

Here, the answer is D,

Statement 1 does not present a flaw. Whilst it is a valid point, it is not directly linked to the argument made in the passage.

Statement 2 is the same as statement 1.

A feasible flaw in the argument would be that the lives of some celebrities are being used to represent all young celebrities in that industry.



Flaw Questions

24.

Two hundred years ago the average woman in a rich nation could expect to give birth to 8.5 children and to die around her fifty-fifth birthday. By 1920 the birth rate had halved to 4.2 children and women's life expectancy had risen to almost seventy years. We can conclude, therefore, that the heavy biological toll of childbirth on women means that the more times they give birth, the faster they age and the more likely they are to die early.

Which one of the following best expresses the flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that, historically, women were ignorant of the toll childbirth takes.
- B It draws conclusions which relate only to women in rich nations.
- C It fails to note falling infant mortality rates in the given time period.
- D It implies that all women who have multiple pregnancies will die early.
- E It fails to consider other factors that might have improved women's life expectancy.

BMAT Q24 (2017)

Here, the answer is E.

P1: 200 years ago, a woman would give birth to 8.5 children on average and life expectancy was 55.

P2: by 1920, birth rate was 4.2 and life expectancy is 70.

C1: heavy biological toll of childbirth on women means that the more times they give birth, the faster they age and the more likely they are to die early

This passage suggests a causation link between birth rate and life expectancy which makes the argument flawed.



Flaw Questions

25.

Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) is a neuroimaging procedure that maps brain activity by detecting blood flow changes. One recent finding of fMRI research relates to variation amongst individuals with respect to patterns of connectivity across regions of the brain. People with strong brain region connectivity were found more likely to exhibit various 'positive' lifestyle traits, including high educational attainment and high levels of life satisfaction. People with weaker connectivity were more likely to exhibit 'negative' qualities, including higher levels of mental illness and substance abuse issues. A beneficial use of fMRI technology would be to conduct 'brain training' for those with weaker connectivity. If exercises were developed to help people learn to regulate their brain activity so that their brain connectivity was improved, they too could benefit from more 'positive' lifestyle attributes.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that everyone considers high educational attainment levels to constitute a 'positive' lifestyle trait.
- B It ignores the more critical health care needs that could be addressed through the use of fMRI technology.
- C It assumes that just because 'positive' traits are associated with strong brain connectivity these traits are caused by the strong connectivity.
- D It ignores the fact that some people whose brain connectivity has been damaged through injury are still able to lead productive lives.

BMAT Q30 (2017)

Here, the answer is C.

The points in the passage show that there is a correlation between brain connectivity and positive/negative lifestyle attributes. However, the conclusion, ('if brain connectivity was improved, people could benefit from more 'positive' lifestyle attributes') portrays this link as causation - suggesting that strong brain connectivity will always lead to positive attributes. This is the flaw in the argument. A, B and C are irrelevant to this argument.



Flaw Questions

26.

The UK government has recently announced its plan to cut funding to state nurseries. This would be a terrible mistake as high-quality nursery education is crucial. My child blossomed at a state nursery – we cannot let these places lower their standards, or even close. I was more than happy to move my child to the state nursery from a private nursery when she became eligible. Six months later, I would say that that our experience of her new nursery has been outstanding. For this reason, a professionally run state nursery should sit at the heart of every community and it should not be affected by financial restrictions.

Which one of the following is the best statement of the flaw in the above argument?

- A It takes a correlation between a child attending a state nursery and being happy to imply causation.
- B It rejects the plan to cut spending only because it was proposed by the government.
- C It generalises about the importance of state nurseries based on a single experience.
- D It supports its argument by appealing to the irrelevant authority of the government.
- E It assumes that a cut in funding will lead to the closure of state nurseries.

BMAT Q4 (2018)

Here, the answer is C.

The passage doesn't provide sufficient evidence for changing current government plans - only one experience is spoken about. A is wrong. B suggests that there is bias against the government which is not implied in the paragraph. D is irrelevant. Cutting funding will eventually result in closure of some nurseries, so this is not necessarily an assumption.



Flaw Questions

27.

It is not unusual for a member of the British Royal Family to serve as an officer in the armed forces, and even, on occasion, to see active service. It happened quite recently when Prince Harry was posted to a war zone, raising questions about the heightened risk that such a high profile target would face, and possibly deflect onto others. At first the prince's location was a well-kept secret, but in due course it became public knowledge, rightly prompting calls in parliament and the media for his recall. If the prince's whereabouts had remained a secret, the level of risk could have been managed. But since his whereabouts were not a secret, risk management was not possible.

Which one of the following commits the same logical flaw as the above argument?

- A If the tide is out, the island can be reached. But the tide isn't out, so the island can't be reached.
- B If the tide is out the island can be reached. But since the island can't be reached, the tide is not out.
- C If the island can be reached, the tide must be out. But since the tide isn't out, the island can't be reached.
- D The island can't be reached unless the tide is out. But the island can be reached, so the tide is out.

BMAT Q17 (2018)

Here, the answer is A.

The argument says that if the Prince's whereabouts had been secret, the level of risk could have been managed. The flaw here is that the argument assumes that just because this is true, the inverse is false. The only option in the answers that follows the same flaw as the argument is A.



Flaw Questions

28.

Domestic cats are popular pets worldwide, and have the potential to significantly affect prey species in both rural and urban areas. Several studies have shown that cats living on the outskirts of urban areas and those living in rural areas bring home more prey, and a greater variety of prey, than cats living in more urbanised environments. However, not all studies have found detrimental effects of cat predation on wildlife. A study in Canberra, Australia, found that domestic cats caught and killed so-called 'invasive' species of rodents and birds – those that are non-native to the ecosystem and whose presence causes or is likely to cause harm. Thus, keeping domestic cats should be encouraged as it has a positive effect on native wildlife.

Which one of the following best expresses the flaw in the above argument?

- A It assumes that keeping domestic cats serves no other purpose than to have a positive effect on native wildlife.
- B It assumes that because numbers of invasive species decreased in an area with domestic cats, the presence of domestic cats caused this decrease.
- C It assumes that the Canberra study was representative of the general environmental effects of keeping domestic cats.
- D It assumes that we should keep domestic cats only if doing so would have a positive effect on native wildlife.

BMAT Q24 (2018)

Here, the answer is C,

P1: Cats living on the outskirts of urban areas and those living in rural areas bring home more prey, and a greater variety of prey, than cats living in more urbanised environments.

P2: In Canberra domestic cats caught and killed so-called 'invasive' species of rodents and birds

C1: Keeping domestic cats should be encouraged as it has a positive effect on native wildlife

The main gap between P2 and C1 is that P2 is specific to Canberra and C1 is a general statement about all domestic cats and the environment. This is a flaw because the passage assumes that what happens in Canberra will happen elsewhere.



Flaw Questions

29.

It never fails. The only time both political parties are willing to work together in the US Congress is when they're cooking up really bad ideas. If they've found a new way to cause trouble, reduce freedom, or generally damage the health of the nation, they work together just fine. This time, the brilliant idea is a sales tax on goods bought on the internet, similar to the current sales tax imposed upon goods bought in physical stores. If the economy is to get stronger, charging consumers more is not a wise move. A tremendous number of people buy online, and if the cost of buying online increases, internet sales will go down, and companies will sell fewer products and have lower profits. Net tax receipts will therefore be less, which means that states and the federal government will collect less revenue, and have less to spend on things like education and healthcare. This is why an internet sales tax is such an unbelievably bad idea.

Which one of the following best expresses the flaw in the above argument?

- A It attacks the people who came up with the idea rather than the idea itself.
- B It fails to take into account the possibility that people who would have bought online will buy from physical stores instead.
- C It wrongly proceeds on the basis that the economy will suffer only if sales fall.
- D It assumes that, if internet sales fall after introducing an internet sales tax, then the introduction of an internet sales tax will have been the cause of the falling sales.

BMAT Q4 (2019)

Here, the answer is B.

The conclusion of the paragraph states that it is overall a bad idea if the government imposes a tax on goods bought on the internet, as this will have a net overall negative impact on the economy, the government and services like education and healthcare. It does not take into account the possibility that people who previously were online shopping could instead start shopping in physical stores. This means that they would encounter a similar tax in physical stores. Thus, this statement B flaws the argument as it is likely that the economy and the government will not be affected to the extent that the author has described, since consumers will be either purchasing goods and services from online stores or physical stores, both of which will have similar taxes.



Flaw Questions

30.

Many countries are experimenting with legalising previously illegal substances, including marijuana and heroin. The rationale for the legalisation movement includes concerns about the financial and social burden of the so-called 'war on drugs', which is widely considered to be a failure, anyway. But what drug legalisation advocates forget is why certain substances were made illegal in the first place: taking them leads to behaviours that are harmful both to users and to the people around them. For evidence of such effects, we only need to look to Colorado in the USA. Following the state's recent legalisation of marijuana, the rates of murder and of violent crime overall increased. This example shows that the drug legalisation movement is as dangerous as it is misguided.

Which of the following describe(s) flaws in the reasoning of the above argument?

- 1 It assumes that because the crime rise in Colorado occurred after marijuana was legalised, the rise was caused by this change in law.
- 2 It fails to acknowledge the problems associated with other substances which are already legal and more socially acceptable.
- 3 It concludes that drug legalisation has negative effects based just on the evidence from one place.

- A 1 only
B 2 only
C 3 only
D 1 and 2 only
E 1 and 3 only
F 2 and 3 only
G 1, 2 and 3



BMAT Q28 (2019)

Here, the answer is B.

The passage concludes that drugs should not be legalised given the negative aspects that illicit drugs bring about. This is supported with the example of increased rates of murder and violent crimes overall in Colorado (following the legalisation of marijuana).

Statement 1 flaws the argument because the conclusion assumes that the rates in crime in Colorado increased after marijuana was legalised and that this specific rise was caused by a change in the law.

Statement 3 also flaws the argument because the passage only discusses one example which has had negative effects. However, it might not be correct to assume that because it occurred in one place, that it will certainly occur elsewhere if illicit drugs were legalised.

Statement 2 is incorrect because there is no mention of the relationship between legalised and socially accepted drugs.