



## Strengthening Questions

1.

“Ready meals” should be labelled with health warnings in the same way as cigarettes are. There has been a big rise in the number of ready meals being sold by the supermarkets. These meals are quick and easy to use, but they tend to have high levels of salt, fat and preservatives in them, which are not good for our long term health.

Which **one** of the following, if true, would strengthen the above argument?

- A People buy ready meals because they do not know how to cook.
- B People who buy ready meals do not have time to cook for themselves.
- C People who buy ready meals are unaware of their unhealthy properties.
- D People who buy ready meals tend also to take little exercise.
- E People who buy ready meals would not respond to a health warning.

BMAT Q2 (2003)

Here, the answer is C.

The passage concludes that “Ready meals” should be labelled with health warnings,’ as they ‘tend to have high levels of salt, fat and preservatives in them, which are not good for our long term health.’

**Statement C** strengthens the conclusion of the passage as it states that people who buy ready made meals are unaware of their unhealthy properties, thus supporting labelling such foods with health warnings.

**Statements A, B, D & E** are not explicitly mentioned and are therefore irrelevant to the argument.



## Strengthening Questions

2.

Nutritionists say that we should eat more fruit and vegetables per day and reduce our intake of fat to help prevent major illnesses. As fruit and vegetables are relatively expensive compared to fatty foods, it is unlikely that families on very low incomes will follow this advice. If the government really wants to improve the health of the nation, it will have to consider taxing foods which are high in fat.

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument in the passage above?

- A Many people prefer eating fatty foods to fruit and vegetables.
- B Advertisers tend to focus on promoting fatty foods.
- C Levels of smoking have reduced in response to higher prices.
- D It is difficult to persuade children of the health benefits of eating less fat.
- E Governments tend to take measures which have short term results.

BMAT Q2 (2004)

**Here, the answer is C.**

The main conclusion of the passage is that taxing high content food may lead to a decrease in the their consumption. This is strengthened by statement C as it explains that similar measures were imposed on smoking cigarettes which lead to reduced levels of smoking.



## Strengthening Questions

3.

A survey of the behaviour of dogs in Vancouver over several months in 2001 revealed a surprising finding. On 27 February, the day before a major earthquake with an epicentre 240 kilometres south of the city, almost 50% of the dogs were observed to be much more active and anxious than usual. The probability of this happening by chance was 1 in 1000, so it is likely that it was connected in some way with the earthquake. Suggested explanations have been that dogs were responding to electromagnetic changes or to the release of subterranean gases associated with earthquakes. But given what we know about dogs' hearing abilities, the most likely explanation is that dogs can hear sounds from rocks scraping or breaking underground before an impending earthquake.

Which one of the following, if true, gives support to the explanation offered in the above passage?

- A Many dogs that had a hearing impairment did not show an increase in anxiety on 27 February 2001.
- B Seismic waves at very high frequencies are usually detectable only up to 100 metres from their source.
- C The observation and recording of the dogs' behaviour was done by the dogs' owners.
- D Monitoring of earthquake zones using acoustic detection systems has failed to find acoustic signals before an earthquake.

BMAT Q14 (2007)

Here, the answer is A.

The passage concludes that 'almost 50% of dogs were observed to be much more active and anxious than usual' prior to a major earthquake on the 27th of February. It supports this by stating that such behaviour is due to a dog's hearing abilities.

**Statement A** strengthens this argument as it states that dogs that had a hearing impairment on the 27th of February, were shown to be less anxious prior to the earthquake.



## Strengthening Questions

4.

During the trial of a 10 year old accused of frequent violent crimes, privacy laws meant that he could only be referred to in the media as 'Child B'. One newspaper, however, continually referred to the boy as the 'Devil Child'. Despite many media sources reporting the difficult and violent upbringing the boy himself had had, calling for understanding and leniency, many letters sent to newspapers and comments posted on internet forums showed strong public anger and calls for the harshest possible sentence. Almost all of those calling for tough measures used the term 'Devil Child'. This shows that the name alone had influenced public opinion and prevented members of the public having sympathy for the child.

Which one of the following statements, if true, would strengthen the argument above?

- 1 The newspaper that used the term 'Devil Child' reported the case and the child's upbringing accurately.
- 2 The editors of the newspaper that used the term 'Devil Child' also called for the harshest possible punishment.
- 3 The newspaper that used the term 'Devil Child' had also continually referred to his victims as 'innocent' and 'defenceless'.

A 1 only

B 2 only

C 3 only

D 1 and 2

E 1 and 3

F 2 and 3



BMAT Q28 (2010)

**Here, the answer is A.**

The passage concludes that those people calling for tough measures used the term 'Devil Child.' The name alone was responsible for forming public opinion and 'prevented members of the public having sympathy for the child.'

This is strengthened by statement 1 because if newspapers were accurate in the child's upbringing and case, then it could be assumed that the newspapers information did not contribute to the bias, but rather the name 'Devil Child' could have been the deciding factor to the public having a biased view.

**Statements 2 and 3** are incorrect because the wording in the newspapers would have been a factor that could have swayed the public's opinion. Thus it does not support the argument that the use of the phrase 'Devil's Child' was the sole factor that influenced the public's opinion.



## Strengthening Questions

5.

The ability to use language (to communicate using symbols and words to represent objects, feelings and thoughts) separates humans from all other animals on earth. By the age of 18, humans know more than 60,000 words, which is a surprising figure when you consider the monosyllabic vocabulary used by most teenagers. From the age of six months babies begin to recognise their own language. There are genetic reasons why this form of communication is unique to humans. Humans and chimps actually share 99% of their DNA, but in 2006 researchers comparing the two species found a gene, HAR1, that makes us dramatically different. It is expressed in the human cerebral cortex, a part of the brain that is particularly associated with language.

Which one of the following pieces of evidence would strengthen the hypothesis that HAR1 explains the human language ability?

- A A chimpanzee gene is found to be 98% identical to HAR1.
- B A human genetic disorder (of specific language impairment) is found to be caused by a mutation in HAR1.
- C HAR1 is found to be expressed in parts of the human brain that are not related to communication.
- D HAR1 is expressed in the brain before birth.
- E Some chimps can be taught to communicate with symbols.

BMAT Q13 (2011)

Here, the answer is B.

The conclusion of the passage is that the gene HAR1, expressed in the human cerebral cortex, gives humans the ability to use language.

**Statement B** strengthens the argument because if a language specific impairment is caused by a mutation in the HAR1 gene, this then supports the argument that this gene gives humans the ability of language.

**Statement A** could to some extent weaken the argument, as the HAR1 gene is thought to be unique to humans. However, having a 98% similarity does not mean that the gene will therefore have the same function as they do in humans.

**Statement C** would weaken the main conclusion.

**Statements D & E** are irrelevant to the argument.



## Strengthening Questions

6.

Police should be given clear permission to use water cannons against rioters and rules about when it is appropriate. Police see water cannons as an effective means of dispersal in some scenarios, incurring fewer injuries to the public than either uncontrolled rioting or other methods of control. In dealing with street riots in major cities last year, police wasted valuable time waiting for overall direction from politicians who fear that inappropriate use of water cannons might antagonise the general public. Clear guidelines could be agreed about using water cannons, for example to deal with rioters who throw missiles and petrol bombs and also where fire and ambulance crews are under threat.

Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the argument in the passage above?

- A Using water cannons would negatively affect the innocent as well as the guilty.
- B Using water cannons does not require special training and resources.
- C Water cannons are no more effective at dispersing rioters than tear gas or rubber bullets.
- D Water cannons cost more than £1m each and need to be deployed in pairs.
- E A survey of 2000 people carried out recently indicated strong public support for water cannons.

BMAT Q24 (2012)

**Here, the answer is E.**

The main conclusion of the passage is that police should be allowed to use water cannons against rioters and therefore need to have clear instructions and guidelines as to when they can use them.

**Statement E** is the best statement from all of the given options as it supports the use of water cannons.

**Statement A, C & D** weaken the argument and are therefore incorrect.

**Statement B** is irrelevant as there is link as to when police would be allowed to use water canons.



## Strengthening Questions

7.

Alcohol is relatively cheap, widely available and addictive. It is now the world's third biggest cause of illness and premature death, behind smoking and high blood pressure. According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s figures, harmful drinking kills 2.5 million people annually, about twice as many as die in road accidents. To reduce the harm caused by alcohol, it is vital to reduce consumption, which is roughly the same worldwide as it was twenty years ago. Governments should follow the WHO's advice on how to treat humanity's collective drink problem, i.e. make alcohol more expensive with a minimum price per unit, and make it less appealing by banning advertising. The alcohol industry, of course, suggests a different approach – encouraging 'responsible drinking', targeting problem drinkers and persuading alcohol companies not to aim their advertising at children.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the above argument?

- A In the UK the heaviest drinking 10% of the population consumes 45% of the alcohol sold.
- B In Scotland consumption of alcohol has doubled over the past five decades as prices have fallen.
- C A minimum price per unit of alcohol would penalise less wealthy people who do not drink heavily.
- D Some alcohol producers invest heavily in advertising.

BMAT Q24 (2013)

**Here, the answer is B.**

The main conclusion of the passage is that in order to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol consumption, prices of alcohol should be increased. This may be achieved by making 'alcohol more expensive with a minimum price per unit, and make it less appealing by banning advertising.'

**Statement B** is correct because it acts to strengthen the conclusion as it states that consumption has increased with a fall in prices. Therefore, it can be assumed that if there were to be a increase in price that demand and therefore consumption of alcohol may fall.



## Strengthening Questions

8.

Next time you feel the flu coming on, you should think twice before reaching for painkillers because they could do more harm than good by increasing the transmission of flu. Obviously painkillers can make you feel better by reducing muscle pains and headaches, but they also lower fever. Fever is thought to be an antiviral weapon, because many viruses find it hard to replicate at temperatures higher than the normal human body temperature. Some studies have shown that lowering fever can prolong viral infections and increase the amount of the virus that can be passed on to others.

Which one of the following, if true, strengthens the above argument?

- A Overuse of painkillers can reduce their effectiveness in curing headaches.
- B Taking painkillers increases the likelihood that flu sufferers will return to work while still infectious.
- C The studies of the effect of lowering fever were carried out on animals, not humans.
- D The most effective defence against flu is an annual anti-flu injection.
- E People are more likely to take an accidental overdose of painkillers when they have a virus.

BMAT Q25 (2014)

**Here, the answer is B.**

The main conclusion of the passage is that painkillers should not be used by people experiencing a fever, as it suppresses the body's natural response of fighting off a viral infection and it may therefore prolong the viral infection.

**Statement B** strengthens the argument as it states that those that take painkillers when suffering from a flu, when they return to work, they may still remain infectious. This supports the argument that taking painkillers prolongs a viral infection as workers return to work and may still be infectious (therefore having not recovered).

**Statement A** is irrelevant as there is no mention of the significance of reducing headaches.

**Statement C** is incorrect because this would act to weaken the argument, as we could not assume that because the studies were shown to support the conclusion in animals, that the outcome would be the same in humans.

**Statement D** is incorrect because there is no mention of an anti-flu injection.

**Statement E** is incorrect as the passage does not mention accidental overdoses.





## Strengthening Questions

9.

Half a million pregnant women are troubled by morning sickness each year in the UK, but this phenomenon is still not fully understood. One theory is that changing levels of hormones act on the brain to heighten an evolutionary adaptive response that helps prevent women from consuming substances that may be harmful. Although less important in the developed world, in the past this would have helped to protect a foetus during the first three months of pregnancy when it is at the most vulnerable stage of development. If the mother eats less, and sticks to simple foods, she is less likely to accidentally ingest something dangerous.

Which of the following would strengthen the theory presented in the above argument?

- 1 Morning sickness symptoms normally decline after the third month of pregnancy.
- 2 Pregnant women sometimes have strange food cravings.
- 3 Women with morning sickness tend to eat less and opt for very simple and bland food.

- 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 Q29 (2014)

**Here, the answer is E.**

The passage concludes that women tend to experience morning sickness more commonly in the first three months of pregnancy. To prevent morning sickness from occurring, women should try to eat bland simple foods during their first trimester of pregnancy.

**Statement 1** is correct because it supports the conclusion that morning sickness symptoms are more common within the first three months as the symptoms start to decline after the third month of pregnancy.

**Statement 3** is correct because it supports the conclusion that women who experience morning sickness will tend to eat less and more bland and simple foods.

**Statement 2** is incorrect because there is no mention of strange food cravings.



## Strengthening Questions

10.

Accident and Emergency (A&E) units have too many patients and not enough permanent staff to treat them. Working in A&E is not attractive to doctors: the environment is frenzied and the working hours are unsociable. For these reasons, newly qualified doctors tend to choose other specialisms. With too few permanent staff, hospitals are spending extremely large sums of money on temporary staff from agencies. One solution is to pay higher wages to permanent A&E doctors to provide an incentive to choose that specialism. The cost to the health service would be no greater – and could be less – as there would be no need to pay agency staff. We should make A&E more attractive to newly qualified doctors by providing financial incentives.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the above argument?

- A Financial reward is not the most important motivator for doctors.
- B The fast pace of A&E work is too demanding for some doctors.
- C Campaigns to reduce the number of people using A&E services have been effective.
- D Some doctors choose to work for agencies in A&E to supplement their salaries.
- E Permanent staff can provide a better standard of care than temporary staff.

BMAT Q30 (2015)

Here, the answer is D.

The passage concludes that in order to incentivise working in A&E, permanent A&E doctors should be paid higher wages. This could reduce the overall costs borne by a health service as this would lead to a decrease in the costs associated with agency paid A&E workers.

**Statement D** suggests that some doctors take on A&E work through agencies in order to supplement their salaries. This implies that they have a higher earning potential offered to them via agencies than through permanent positions. This thus supports the argument that doctors may be incentivised to pick a speciality based on pay. Thus, increasing A&E permanent wages may lead to an increase in A&E doctors working there permanently.

**Statements A & B** both weaken the argument, as an increase in pay would not incentivise workers as well as the working conditions in A&E act as a deterrent.

**Statements C and E** are irrelevant to the main conclusion.



## Strengthening Questions

11.

Over-prescription of antibiotics by doctors who respond to patients' demands has raised the drug resistance of harmful bacteria. Drug-resistant bacteria can make routine surgery and minor cuts fatal if infections take hold. We could introduce penalties for doctors who over-prescribe, but this would not be enough. Given the scale and escalation of antibiotic resistance, we need to discover a new class of antibiotics. In the past, pharmaceutical companies have not regarded research on antibiotics as potentially profitable. Governments should give financial incentives to the pharmaceutical industry to intensify work on finding new classes of antibiotics which could be kept in reserve for emergencies such as a global epidemic. This would make it more attractive for pharmaceutical companies to carry out the necessary research.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the above argument?

- A Governments will not allow routine sales of a new antibiotic, except in an emergency.
- B In some countries antibiotics can be bought without a prescription from a doctor.
- C Antibiotics are useless against viruses and often unnecessary against mild bacterial infections.
- D Use of antibiotics in livestock production has increased bacterial resistance to several antibiotics.

BMAT Q17 (2016)

Here, the answer is A.

The passage concludes that an increase in antibiotic resistance has meant that pharmaceutical companies need to create a new class of antibiotics. This new class of antibiotics would be strictly reserved for emergency scenarios such as a global epidemic. The government must therefore provide financial incentives to pharmaceutical companies to produce these new antibiotics.

**Statement A** strengthens this argument as any new antibiotic that is made will not be sold routinely, but rather only be given in emergency cases. This supports the conclusion that new antibiotics should be created for emergency cases.

**Statement B** is evidence to support the main conclusion, rather than strengthening the overarching conclusion.

**Statement C & D** are irrelevant to the argument as they are not mentioned.



## Strengthening Questions

12. While well-intentioned, the campaign to ban tackling in school rugby constitutes an overreaction. Such a ban could lead to unintended negative consequences for the young people involved in the sport, and it must not be implemented. Many parents and others are very concerned about the potential for rugby tackling to cause head and spinal cord injuries. However, the possibility of injury is present in any sport, and the health risks associated with physical inactivity are widely understood. Also, as is the case with boxing or any other contact sport, full-contact rugby enables players to channel aggression in a positive, controlled way. It is surely better to let young people show aggression through rugby than to wait for violent behaviour to happen impulsively.

Which of the following, if true, would strengthen the above argument?

- 1 It is unfeasible for schools to replace rugby with other activities that can channel aggression in a controlled manner.
  - 2 Aggression is a natural or unavoidable feature of many young people's behaviour.
  - 3 It is impossible to sustain head or spinal cord injuries in other sports played at schools.
- 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 Q13 (2018)

**Here, the answer is D.**

The main conclusion of this passage is that rugby tackling should not be banned as the positives of the sport outweigh the negatives.

**Statement 1** supports this argument because it states that any other sport that could help young people channel aggression, may not be introduced to schools, as it is not feasible. Therefore, it supports keeping rugby as a sport within schools as a way for young people to channel their aggression in a positive and controlled manner.

**Statement 2** is correct because if aggression is accepted as natural, there needs to be a method of channelling this behaviour in a positive way. Rugby is stated to do this in the passage.

**Statement 3** weakens the argument as it favours other sports, as they cannot cause head or spinal cord injuries.



## Strengthening Questions

13.

It is known that one of the factors that can promote better health in infants is the good health of the mother. What is less well-known is that there are real dangers presented by bottle-feeding, a practice that has become very popular in developing countries. Firstly, formula milk lacks the protective properties (antibodies, enzymes, long chain fatty acids and hormones) of breast milk. Secondly, there is the danger of contamination in situations where hygiene is poorly understood or difficult to achieve. Thirdly, formula milk may be over-diluted as a way of saving on cost.

Companies selling formula milk have led aggressive advertising campaigns to promote bottle-feeding; as a result, many governments in the developing world have introduced limits on or banned such marketing. More action is urgently needed throughout the developing world if we are to help women and avoid infant ill health and mortality. One estimate put the number of infant deaths in the developing world caused by bottle-feeding at 13% of all deaths.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the above argument?

- A Breastfeeding is most common in the developed world among better-educated women.
- B Women in developing countries often choose bottle-feeding as it is easier to combine with returning to work.
- C Campaigns to limit the commercial promotion of bottle-feeding are becoming more widespread.
- D Breastfeeding has health benefits for the mother as well as for the child.

BMAT Q26 (2018)

Here, the answer is D.

The main conclusion of the passage is that bottle feeding should be more heavily controlled as it is associated with poor infant health and can increase infant mortality in developing countries. Breast-feeding should be encouraged as breast milk has 'protective properties (antibodies, enzymes, long chain fatty acids and hormones). Additionally, women who are in better health can improve their infants health.

**Statement D** is therefore correct because if breastfeeding has benefits for both the mother and for the child, a mother's improved health can have further positive effects on an infants health.

**Statement A** cannot be assumed to be correct as the passage only mentions the popularity of bottled milk in developed countries and not its use in developed countries.

**Statement B** is irrelevant as it is not mentioned.

**Statement C** is incorrect as there is no mention of campaigns used to deter the use of bottled milk.



## Strengthening Questions

14. The rise of the internet-connected smartphone and similar devices poses a risk to the ties that bind us together within society. It is true that for many people, these devices provide ready access to a wealth of information and help them to maintain existing interpersonal relationships and to develop new ones. Yet the devices can also act as a significant obstacle within one of the most important relationships of all: that between a young child and his or her caregivers. With many users of smartphones checking them hundreds of times a day, psychologists are increasingly worried about the potential 'cyber effect' of parents and others shifting more of their attention away from the young children around them. Eye contact and other features of face-to-face 'real world' interaction are essential for the social and emotional development of young children.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the above argument?

- A In previous generations, families across the world tended to have larger numbers of children.
- B Internet-connected devices help some people who find face-to-face interactions difficult cope better with day-to-day life.
- C More young children are now being entertained with videos and other content on smartphones rather than being encouraged to interact with people around them.
- D In a hundred years or so, many households in both poor and rich countries will own robots that are capable of interacting with us as if they were human.

BMAT Q2 (2019)

Here, the answer is C.

The passage concludes that given the increasing role of smart phones and technology in peoples lives generally, there may be a 'cyber effect' on children whose parents are increasingly shifting their attention away from their children (as a result of technology).

**Statement C** strengthens this argument as young children who are entertained more with videos and smartphone content, rather than encouraged to interact with people, can be fairly said to be the result of the 'cyber effect.'

**Statements A, B and D** are irrelevant as they are not mentioned in a relevant way that would help to strengthen the overarching conclusion that parents are potentially having a 'cyber effects' on their children based on their increased interactions with technology rather than with people.