Assumption / Objection Family

Match Family

Inference Family

Paradox Island

Flaw

rank **1st**

STIMULUS
arguments, reasoning

~40% of them commit one of the Famous Flaws. 60% commit unique flaws.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium High

Very important to try to predict an answer. Keep analyzing until you can articulate a flaw, but stay flexible while reading the answers.

STEM KEYWORDS
vulnerable to criticism, flawed, questionable

The argument is most vulnerable to criticism because it

READING STIMULUS

Be the Anti-Conclusion's Lawyer

Read like a skeptic! You have to argue with this person. Find an entry point. Can you call out an illegal move, spot an *assumption* or argue the *anti-conclusion*?

SEE THIS?	**CONSIDER THIS:**
conditional logic	Nec/Suff (reversals/negations)
rebuttal arg	Ad Hom, Unproven/False
copycat ideas	Sampling, Part/Whole
causal conclusion	Alternate Explanations
recommendations	Overlooked Downsides
comparisons	Overlooked Differences

JUDGING ANSWERS

1. Is this descriptively true?
2. If so, is it objectionable?

"Takes for granted that X..."
"Presumes X w/o justification"
"Fails to establish that X..."
Did we NEED to assume X?

"Fails to consider that Y..."
"Overlooks possibility that Y..."
If true, would Y WEAKEN?

"Infers Y on the basis of X"
"Takes for granted if X then Y"
"Fails to consider even if X, ~Y"
Does X match Ev. and Y Conc.?

WRONG ANSWERS

Not True they *didn't* assume that / they *didn't* fail to consider that (very rare) / they *didn't* conclude that / they *didn't* have evidence like that / they *didn't* make that reasoning move.

Not Objectionable that idea is irrelevant so no need to consider it / that description is true but that's not a reasoning problem / that assumption is totally reasonable (very rare).

RIGHT ANSWERS

- call out assumptions
- present reasonable objections
- describe faulty reasoning moves

Necessary Assumption

rank **2nd**

STIMULUS
arguments, reasoning

1/2 test a missing link or fact internal to arg, and 1/2 test a new consideration that could weaken.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium

For missing links / facts, we'll have a very specific prediction, but for new considerations, a fuzzy idea.

STEM KEYWORDS
assumption, assuming depends/relies/must

Which of the following in an assumption on which the argument depends?

READING STIMULUS

Look for Missing Links/Ideas

If there's conditional logic or a math-y feel:
- Is there a *New Concept* in the Conclusion & what's its closest match in the Evidence?
- Is there a *Term Shift*, assumed similarity, or untriggered conditional in the Evidence?

Spot Objections to Neutralize

If arg. sounds pretty good, Anti-Conclusion!
Causal - Alternate explanations
Plan - Possible downsides
Comparison - Crucial differences

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Does this *need* to be true for the argument to work?

- If I negate this, does it weaken the arg? (don't use Neg Test on conditional answers)

- Lean *away* from strong wording and new ideas.

- Lean *towards* familiar ideas and answers that rule out an idea using the word "not" (drop the 'not', does it weaken?)

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Strong most / the only = red flags!

Out of Scope unmentioned ideas not relevant to conclusion

Irrelevant Comparison / Causal Relationship / Quality

Weakens appealing but opposite!

Reversed/Negated Logic right ideas, wrong order

RIGHT ANSWERS

- *Missing Links* connect ideas
- *Defenders* rule out objections

Weaken

rank **3rd**

STIMULUS
arguments, hypotheses

Mostly causal explanations (aka hypotheses), plans, predictions, comparisons, or recommendations.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium Low

Sometimes predict a specific idea, but usually predict a *type* of answer. Ex: "show how X and Y are different" or "rule out alt. explanation for Y."

STEM KEYWORDS
weakens, casts doubt, undermines

Which of the following, if true, most weakens the argument?

READING STIMULUS

Find Conclusion vs. Evidence

If there's a *Curious Fact,* anticipate a *causal* conclusion. If it's a *plan*, think about *Goal vs. Plan*. If *comparative*, think: *Fair to Compare? Upsides vs. Downsides*?

Be the Anti-Conclusion's Lawyer

Address the Evidence
GIVEN THAT I'm arguing for the Anti-Conc, HOW CAN I RESPOND TO the Evidence?

Offset the Evidence
GIVEN THAT the evidence is true, HOW CAN I STILL ARGUE the Anti-Conc?

JUDGING ANSWERS

- New ideas & strong language are embraced!

- You might need common sense to connect what the answer says to what impact it has on the argument.

- Use "*best available*" thinking: it doesn't have to kill the argument, just make it worse. And if 2 or 3 seem to hurt, which hurts *the most?*

WRONG ANSWERS

No Impact deals with a comparison, causal relationship, quality, or detail that is irrelevant to the conclusion.

Unclear Impact we'd need to know something else to judge impact.

Weaker Impact (very rare) answer isn't AS impactful as correct answer.

Opposite Impact strengthens the arg.

RIGHT ANSWERS

- make Conclusion less plausible
- undermine an assumption
- suggest an *alternate explanation*
- make Evidence less trustworthy

Strengthen

rank **6th**

STIMULUS
arguments, hypotheses

Mostly causal explanations (aka hypotheses), plans, predictions, comparisons, or recommendations.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium Low

Sometimes we predict a specific idea, but usually we just predict a *type* of answer. Ex: "make idea X more plausible" or "rule out alt. explanation."

STEM KEYWORDS
strengthens, supports

Which of the following, if true, most supports the argument?

READING STIMULUS

Find Conclusion vs. Evidence

If there's a *Curious Fact*, anticipate a *causal* conclusion. If it's a *plan*, think about *Goal vs. Plan*. If *comparitive*, think: *Fair to Compare? Upsides / Downsides?*

Be the Anti-Conclusion's Lawyer

If you spot a *missing link* or a way to strengthen, skip this step. But if the argument sounds pretty good, think about how you'd *weaken* the argument so you can figure out where it still needs help.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- New ideas & strong language are embraced!
- You might need common sense to connect what the answer says to what impact it has on the argument.
- Use "*best available*" thinking: it doesn't have to make the argument perfect, just better. And if 2 or 3 seem to help, which helps *the most?*

WRONG ANSWERS

No Impact deals with a comparison, causal relationship, quality, or detail that is irrelevant to the conclusion.

Unclear Impact we'd need to know something else to judge impact.

Weaker Impact (very rare) answer isn't AS impactful as the right answer.

Opposite Impact weakens the arg.

RIGHT ANSWERS

-.make Conc. more plausible
- affirm an assumption
- rule out an objection
- make Evid. more compelling

Sufficient Assumption

rank **8th**

STIMULUS
arguments, reasoning

Mainly tests a missing link/idea. Sometimes tests potential objection.

PREDICT ANSWER?
High

Older tests - usually predict answer. Modern tests - might only predict part of answer. New Idea in Conc.? It MUST be in the correct answer.

STEM KEYWORDS
if assumed, conclusion follows logically

The conclusion of the argument follows logically if which of the following is assumed?

READING STIMULUS

Find the Conclusion

Separate Conc. into **Naming** & Telling part.

*Ex: Thus, **gray cats** | are creepy roommates.*

Did arg provide rule for Telling Part?

If the Evidence didn't provide a rule like

[___] –> Creepy Roommate

then the right answer must be such a rule.

If Evid. *did* provide a rule, we need to know that the Naming Part (gray cats) triggers it.

Otherwise, argue Anti-conc. to find a gap.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- If there was a New Idea in the Conclusion, does this answer address the New Idea?
- If conditional, is this a reversal or negation of what I wanted (wrong) or the contrapositive of what I wanted (correct)?
- If I combine this answer with facts from evidence, can I logically derive the conclusion?
- Does this go from what we *do* know to what we *need* to know?

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Weak less than certain = red flag

Out of Scope unmentioned ideas are almost always wrong.

Reversed/Negated Logic appealing because it has the right ideas but in the wrong order.

Inference / Nec Assumption right answer for a different question type, but doesn't prove the conclusion.

RIGHT ANSWERS

95% link language within the arg.
5% rule out a potential Objection

Principle Strengthen

rank **11th**

STIMULUS
argument (common)
princ + application (rare)

Mainly tests a missing link/idea. Sometimes tests weighing competing concerns.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium High

Argument flavor connects Evidence ideas to Conclusion ideas. Application flavor proves the situation triggers the principle.

STEM KEYWORDS
principle, if valid, most helps / justifies

Which of the following principles, if valid, most helps to justify...

READING STIMULUS

Stimulus = Argument

Conclusion makes a judgment: usually a recommendation. Evidence gives you facts. Think "Evid. Facts → Conc. Judgment" & look out for the contrapositive: it's right too!

If competing concerns, prephrase "good thing > bad thing" or vice versa.

Stimulus = Principle + Application

The situation in the application always concludes the Outcome of the principle but fails to establish the Trigger. Answer must establish the Trigger.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Does this have language that matches the conclusion, on the right side of the arrow? If not, defer.
- Do the evidence facts trigger this rule? If not, eliminate..
- If the answer isn't conditional, does it weigh tradeoffs in favor of the conclusion?
- For Application flavor, does this establish the situation triggers the principle?

WRONG ANSWERS

Bad Conc. Match answer lacks language that matches up with Conc.

Bad Evid. Match the evidence doesn't trigger the rule described in this answer.

Reversed/Negated Logic this has good ideas, but in the wrong order (Conc. → Evid. or ~Evid. → ~Conc.)

RIGHT ANSWERS

Usually a conditional rule: Trigger applies to Evid and Outcome matches Conc. Sometimes a nec assump or comparison that weighs tradeoffs.

Evaluate

rank **18th**

STIMULUS
arguments, reasoning

Just like Strengthen / Weaken. Mostly causal explanations, plans, predictions, comparisons.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium Low

Similar to Weaken. We think of at least one way to argue Anti-Conc, but answers often surprise us.

STEM KEYWORDS
evaluate / evaluating

In evaluating X's argument, it would be most helpful to know which of the following?

READING STIMULUS

Find Conclusion vs. Evidence

Listen for *Curious Facts* and anticipate *causal* conclusions. If it's a *plan / recommendation*, you can shift to thinking in terms of *Goal vs. Plan.*

Be the Anti-Conclusion's Lawyer

Argue for the Anti-conclusion. Think about *Alternatives*. Attack the support's relevance, importance or completeness, or concede it but offset it with some *Other Consideration*.

JUDGING ANSWERS

The answer choices ask questions: typically yes/no, numeric, or qualitative. Consider possible answers to each question being posed.

Is there a possible answer to this question that would Weaken the argument?

If so, pick it.

WRONG ANSWERS

No Impact deals with a comparison, causal relationship, quality, or detail that is irrelevant to the conclusion.

Unclear Impact we'd need to know something else to judge impact.

Weaker Impact (very rare) answer isn't AS impactful as correct answer

RIGHT ANSWERS

Pose a question that can be answered in a way that would Weaken, or answered an opposite way, which would Strengthen.

Most Supported

rank 4th

STIMULUS
information, statements, fill-in-the-blank (rare)

Most commonly tests causal connections, but also rebuttals, analogies, conditional rules, pivots, and math-y ideas.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium Low

Predicting the general idea they want to "reward" us for understanding is easier than predicting how they'll *present* that idea in the right answer.

STEM KEYWORDS
most supports/supported if [stim] is true

The statements above most support which of the following?

READING STIMULUS

Look for Causal Connections
Sometimes indicated by causal verbs (*influences / contributes / leads to / promotes, etc.)*, sometimes by how claims are connected (*as a result / because of this / this makes possible, etc.*), and sometimes causality is implicitly suggested by two differences (suggests diff 1 causes diff 2).

Pivots / Analogies / Rules
We might have to reconcile two ideas joined with a Pivot, complete the missing idea in an analogy, or apply a rule to a specific situation.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Does this answer reward me for understanding a cause/effect connection the stimulus presented?
- Do I need to combine 2+ ideas to derive this answer? If not, be very suspicious!
- Is this the most provable claim of the five available choices? Remember, it doesn't have to be 100% guaranteed.

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Strong it's easier to support claims with a lower burden of proof.

Out of Scope it's hard to support a claim that includes something we never talked about.

Opposite answer seems to go against what we learned in the stimulus.

Unsupported Comparison / Causal Relationship

RIGHT ANSWERS

An idea we can support by combining 2 or more claims from the stimulus.

Must Be True

rank 7th

STIMULUS
information, statements

Most of them test conditional logic. Quantifiers, causal chains, and pivots are tested, too.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium High

With conditional/causal chains, can often predict "head to tail" inference. If a fact triggers a rule, or if given two math-y ideas, can often predict.

STEM KEYWORDS
must be true can be inferred

If the statements are true, which of the following must be true?

READING STIMULUS

See any Conditional / Causal Ideas?
If there are multiple conditionals or causal claims, do they chain together?

If there is a conditional + a fact, does the fact trigger the rule (usually by contrapositive)?

See any Quantifiers / Math-y Ideas?

Some B's are A
All A's are C.
Some B"s are C

You can chain *most/some* to *all* as long as *all* is 2nd

Most A's are B
Most A's are C
Some B"s are C

If 2 "most" or "all" claims have the same left term, there's some overlap of the right terms.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Can I logically derive this by combining ideas from stimulus?
- Is anything new or stronger than the stimulus claims?

For conditional answers:

- Is this an illegal negation or reversal of what we know?
- Pause at Trigger idea and ask if the stim ever provided that idea as a Trigger or Contrapos Trigger (if not, eliminate)

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Strong strong is OK only if it matches the conditionals (most don't!)

Out of Scope we can't prove a claim about an idea that was never mentioned.

Opposite answer goes against what we learned in the stimulus.

Unsupported Comparison / Causal Relationship

RIGHT ANSWERS

100% derivable by combining claims from the stimulus, but doesn't need to use 100% of the info in the stim.

Agree/Disagree

rank 13th

STIMULUS
two speakers

1st person always makes argument. 2nd person often does. But more important to read as statements.

PREDICT ANSWER?
medium-high

We'll either intuitively hear the disconnect, or we'll go claim by claim through P1's statements to figure out which claim (or assump) P2 dislikes.

STEM KEYWORDS
disagree / agree, point at issue

Based on their statements, X and Y are committed to disagreeing about which of the following?

READING STIMULUS

Read Both + Be a Good Mediator
Listen carefully and try to understand on what level the 2nd person is disagreeing.

If you aren't sure, then revisit P1's statements one by one. Pause and ask yourself whether P2 seems to be arguing against that claim. (if no explicit claims qualify, consider P1's assumptions)

Agree Questions (rare)
there's not explicit agreement, so what background idea would they both agree to?

JUDGING ANSWERS

- can I support that one of these speakers would Agree with this? (if not, eliminate)
- if so, can I support that the other speaker would Agree with the negation of this? (if not, eliminate)
- does this have a concept that one of the speakers never addresses?

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Strong can't support that anyone has endorsed a claim this extreme.

Too Weak who would Disagree with this? Negating it yields extreme idea.

Half Scope one of the speakers never addressed this issue.

Nobody Agrees / Disagrees
Neither person talked about this.

RIGHT ANSWERS

They often communicate P1's position using P2's wording, or vice versa.

Must Be False

rank 17th

STIMULUS
information, statements

Vast majority test conditional logic, but some test causal chains or pivots.

PREDICT ANSWER?
Medium

The answer usually contradicts a conditional rule in the stimulus, or contradicts an inference we can make by chaining or combining claims.

STEM KEYWORDS
must be false could be true EXCEPT

If the statements are true, which of the following must be false?

READING STIMULUS

Look for Conditional Ideas
A lot of correct answers just contradict a conditional rule or extreme claim.

An answer can contradict a conditional if the Trigger applies but the Outcome doesn't.

Infer by Combining Ideas
Can you chain conditionals together? Can you apply a rule to a fact? Can you make a math-y inference? If so, the correct answer will probably go against this inference.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Does the stimulus contradict this answer? Can I prove the negation of this answer?
- Does this answer call back to a conditional rule and present a counterexample?
- Is this answer presenting an *illegal inference* like a negation or a reversal? While those aren't inferrable, they don't actually contradict the original claim.

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Weak it's hard to contradict a weak statement (unless you're contradicting a conditional with a counterexample).

Out of Scope can't contradict a claim about something we never talked about.

Bad Inference there's a difference between something we can't infer and something we CAN contradict.

RIGHT ANSWERS

Usually contradicts a conditional by telling us about something that IS the trigger but ISN'T the outcome, or it contradicts some inference we made by combining ideas.

Method

rank **9th**

STIMULUS **arguments, often two speakers**

These almost never involve conditional logic. More about plans / judgments / causal explanations.

PREDICT ANSWER? **Medium Low**

When the argument commits one of the 3 most common moves, we'll have a strong suspicion. But answers can always surprise us.

STEM KEYWORDS **proceeds by, technique, responds by**

X's argument proceeds by ..
Y responds to X by ..

READING STIMULUS

One-Speaker Stimulus
Find Conc + Evid, but focus on the type of evidence or reasoning move author made:

Three Most Common Moves
- *analogy / distinction*
- *faulty implications of logic / plan*
- *eliminating / suggesting an alternative*

Others *apply/undermine a generalization, challenge an assumption, appeal to authority*

Two-Speaker Stimulus
Is S2 calling into question S1's conclusion, their evidence, or an assumption?

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Is this description true? If so, pick it. If not, eliminate.

Many answers have two-part structures in which one part should match the Conclusion and the other, the Evidence. Check each separately:

"argues X **on the basis of** Y"
"X-ing **by** doing Y"
"supports X by presenting Y"
does X match conclusion?
does Y match the evidence?

WRONG ANSWERS

Too Strong some part of the answer is too strong to match the argument.

Bad Conclusion Match the way the answer describes the conclusion doesn't match the actual conclusion.

Bad Evidence Match the way the answer describes the evidence doesn't match the actual evidence.

RIGHT ANSWERS

What they say is true. It doesn't matter if it only focuses on 1 part of the argument. If it's true, it's correct.

Main Conclusion

rank **10th**

STIMULUS **arguments**

Usually upside-down arguments (conc followed by support). Frequently rebuttals. Sometimes have intermediate conclusions.

PREDICT ANSWER? **high**

We know what claim is the conclusion. They might re-word it, but it's gotta be that claim.

STEM KEYWORDS **main conclusion**

Which of the following is the main conclusion of the argument?

READING STIMULUS

Listen for Upside-Down Arg
Does the paragraph start with an *Attribution*? then we'll probably see a *Pivot + Rebuttal*

Does 1st sentence seem like *Author's Opin*? then probably a *First Sentence Conclusion*.

Beware Intermediate Conclusions
When present, they're usually the last claim.

Use Opinion / Support Indicators
Conclusion is usually subtly indicated by an Opinion word ("should / probably") or indirectly by a Support Indicator like "after all / for / to see this".

JUDGING ANSWERS

- Is this answer equivalent in meaning to the claim I identified as the conclusion?

that's it!

Don't waste time or brainpower considering answers that don't resemble the claim you picked as the Conclusion.

WRONG ANSWERS

Premise in most cases, the final claim of the paragraph is a premise, and they almost always include that as a trap.

Inference Bait these express an idea that was never stated (thus: wrong!) but they're tempting because it feels like something derivable from subtext.

Bad Conc Match these are aimed at the correct claim, but distort the meaning (usually b being too strong).

RIGHT ANSWERS

Matches the meaning of the claim we picked as the Conclusion.

Parallel Flaw

rank **12th**

STIMULUS **arguments**

Lots of Nec vs. Suff (illegal reversals or negations), bad quantifier math, Part vs. Whole, ad hom, causal, and unproven vs. proven false.

PREDICT ANSWER? **medium**

We summarize the orig argument in the form of an Abstract Recipe, a famous flaw, or generic objection.

STEM KEYWORDS **most similar, flawed / questionable**

The pattern of flawed reasoning in the argument is most similar to which of the following?

READING STIMULUS

Conditional Logic?
If we see any conditional premise, it's almost guaranteed that the argument will perform an illegal reversal / negation.

Other Famous Flaw? Part vs. Whole is 2nd most common. if it's a rebuttal, look out for Ad Hom and Unproven v. Untrue.

Otherwise ... if there are quantifiers or copycat ideas, maybe diagram it. If not, just argue the anti-conclusion but make sure your objection isn't topic specific. Keep it generic like, "couldn't both things be false?"

JUDGING ANSWERS

Defer on the Worst Answers
Have a "must-have" or "core ingredient" you want to find in each answer, and if it's not there move on. e.g. Are you checking for similar conc? Are you checking for a conditional premise? An overlapping term?

1st pass: be picky about the arg having the same type / strength / number of claims.

2nd pass: think about "essence" and tolerate imperfect matches.

WRONG ANSWERS

Bad Evidence Match you don't get as many prem's as you need, they aren't the right style/strength or don't overlap in the correct way.

Bad Conclusion Match the conc is not the same type or strength of claim as the original argument's.

Bad Validity Match orig arg's logic was flawed the answer's is valid.

RIGHT ANSWERS

The best available match. More important to match flaw than to match structure perfectly.

Principle Conform

rank **16th**

STIMULUS **60% an argument 40% a principle (or two)**

We read an arg, thinking about what principle connects Evid to Conc, or we read 1-2 explicit principles.

PREDICT ANSWER? **medium**

With args, predict a ½ Evid, ½ Conc linking answer. With principles, conc should match outcome and evid should establish the trigger.

STEM KEYWORDS **principle conforms / underlies**

Which of the following principles most conforms to the reasoning?

READING STIMULUS

Stimulus = Argument
Conclusion usually has normative language. Prephrase a missing "If Evid, then Conc" link, but try to express Evidence in general terms.

Stimulus = Principle
We often want to diagram the rule, and we contrapose our rule if needed to move the normative language to the Right Side.

Stimulus = Arg *illustrating* Principle
Read the arg and try to write your own rule, in generic / portable language.

JUDGING ANSWERS

- does this have language that matches up with the conclusion, on the right side of the arrow?

- do we know the trigger of this rule applies to the thing we're talking about?

- (if answer isn't conditional), does this weigh tradeoffs in favor of the conclusion?

- (for Princ + App) does this establish the principle's trigger?

WRONG ANSWERS

Bad Conc Match answer lacks language that matches up with Conc.

Bad Evid Match the evidence doesn't establish that the trigger of this answer would be applicable.

Reversed/Negated Logic this has good ideas, but in the wrong order (Conclusion is in trigger, f.e.)

RIGHT ANSWERS

usually conditional rules: Trigger applies to evidence and Outcome matches conc. Sometimes weak necessary assumptions or comparisons that weigh tradeoffs.

Parallel

rank **14th**

STIMULUS arguments
Tons of conditional logic, and/or's, ruling out options, math-y inferences, and sometimes comparative or causal arguments.

PREDICT ANSWER? medium
We summarize the orig argument in the form of an Abstract Recipe or a more conversational gist/principle.

STEM KEYWORDS most similar, parallel pattern of reasoning
The pattern of reasoning in the argument is most similar to which of the following?

READING STIMULUS

Conditionals / Copycats / Quantifiers?
If the argument contains conditional logic, quantifiers (e.g some, most, all), and contains some Copycat ideas (the same word or concept is mentioned in multiple claims), then it's a pretty good candidate for diagramming the argument w/ Algebra.

Otherwise …
capture the gist conversationally, using reasoning patterns like, "concludes we should not infer something from this sample because it's is an atypical sample."

JUDGING ANSWERS

Defer on the Worst Answers
Have a "must-have" or "core ingredient" you want to find in each answer, and if it's not there move on. e.g. Are you checking for similar conc? Are you checking for a conditional premise? An overlapping term?

1st pass: be picky about the arg having the same type / strength / number of claims.

2nd pass: think about "essence" and tolerate imperfect matches.

WRONG ANSWERS

Bad Evidence Match you don't get as many prem's as you need, they aren't the right style/strength or don't overlap in the correct way.

Bad Conclusion Match the conc is not the same type or strength of claim as the original argument's.

Bad Validity Match orig arg's logic was sound but the answer's is flawed.

RIGHT ANSWERS

The best available match. Be picky if there are multiple contenders. Be approximate if none are perfect.

Role

rank **15th**

STIMULUS arguments
Usually "upside-down: arguments: Conclusion is before the Evidence. Frequently rebuttals. Sometimes have Intermediate Conclusions.

PREDICT ANSWER? Medium-High
We'll predict whether it is the Main Conclusion, Evidence, an Opposing Idea, or is Neutral.

STEM KEYWORDS role / functions / figures
The claim that *blah blah blah* plays which of the following roles in the argument?

READING STIMULUS

Listen for an Upside-Down Argument
Does the paragraph start with an *Attribution*? Then we'll probably see a *Pivot + Rebuttal*

Does 1st claim seem like *Author's Opinion?* It's probably a *First Sentence Conclusion.*

Notice Intermediate Conclusions
Very common on Role. Usually an adjacent idea is wearing a Support Indicator (for, after all, because, since, *colons*).

Don't Worry About the Claim Yet
Understand structure before you think about the specific claim we're asked about.

JUDGING ANSWERS

First, elim answers that name the wrong Role (i.e. you want Support and it says Conc), then for remaining answers, look for mismatches on the back end of the answer (like wrong Conc).

To judge whether a supporting claim is an Intermed Conc, ask *why*? and see if there's any claim providing support for it.

For dense answers, take a bite sized piece from end of the answer and match it with the arg, then relate the next piece of answer to that.

WRONG ANSWERS

Wrong Role the answer misidentifies whether it's Conc, Support, Opposing, or Neutral.

Bad Conclusion Match the answer correctly describes the claim but mischaracterizes the conclusion.

Bad Description some part of the answer doesn't match the argument.

RIGHT ANSWERS

Everything it says is true! (or at least it's the best available truth)

Paradox

rank **5th**

STIMULUS paradox, discrepancy, surprising results
Usually we get a couple background ideas, then there's a pivot word like "Yet / However / Nevertheless" and then a surprising final idea

PREDICT ANSWER? low
Other than math-y paradoxes, there are usually lots of ways to resolve so the answers can easily surprise us.

STEM KEYWORDS resolves, reconciles, explains, paradox
Which of the following, if true, most helps to reconcile this apparent discrepancy?

READING STIMULUS

Frame the Tension
Our goal is to locate the surprising idea, and set it against some background idea that makes it surprising.

The surprising idea is usually the final claim, and is prefaced by a Pivot. But sometimes it's a more natural fit to treat the final idea as the background claim and the earlier one as the surprise. Decide and assign to this form:

Given that … background claim(s)
How can it be that … surprising claim?

JUDGING ANSWERS

We Like New + Strong
Like Str / Wkn, answers are "which, if true, does the most?"

Use Common Sense
Your allowed to use common sense to explain how an answer impacts the stimulus.

Is it Giving Us a Distinction?
To resolve a paradox, we almost always need a distinction between this and that. Quickly elim Answers w/ no distinction.

WRONG ANSWERS

No Distinction / Impact has no power to address the surprise (usually because it doesn't provide distinction)

Opposite Impact this makes the surprising idea even more surprising.

Cheats Paradox the story this tells for the surprise goes against background

Reinforces Background might explain Background but not the Surprise.

RIGHT ANSWERS

helps to give us some story to tell about how the surprise could be true, despite the background.

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answer could be TOO STRONG
Necessary Assumption, Most Supported, Must Be True, Method Agree/Disagree, Role, Main Conclusion, Principle-Conform, Evaluate

answer could be TOO WEAK
Paradox, Weaken, Strengthen,
Sufficient Assumption, Principle-Strengthen
(*Which of the following, if true/valid/assumed …*)

LSAT LAB