Overview of the entire section-
As a whole, this section was slightly more difficult than the average LSAT reading comprehension section. In all, there were 26 questions—eight detail, seven inference, six main idea, and five miscellaneous type questions. In an average reading comprehension section, you would expect to find two more main idea questions and fewer miscellaneous ones. The first passage, about the legal questions surrounding e-mail, privacy, and the work place, was the easiest and had seven questions. The third passage, about inter-tribal contact and its affect on Native American tribes, was the second easiest and had eight questions. The second passage, about scholarly treatment of Homeric poems, was the second most difficult and had six questions. The final passage, about scientific methods of studying complex systems, was the most difficult and had but five questions. If you were pressed for time, the fourth passage would be the one to eliminate.

Remember, familiarity with a topic is helpful, but not necessary for doing well. The most important factor is to understand the structure of the passages and the types of questions.

Overview of Passage #1- Privacy of e-mail in the workplace
This was easier than the average passage. Most LSAT takers have a general understanding of its subject matter (legal issues and e-mail). The author used simple language and a straightforward presentation. Seven questions followed the passage, making it ideal to earn maximum points in a minimal amount of time—familiar subject matter, simple style, and seven or eight questions.

1. Main Idea- One-third to one-fourth of all reading comprehension questions are main idea questions. Every set contains at least one main idea question. You may have to identify the main idea, the primary purpose, or even the best title. A question may also ask how to best describe or summarize the passage. Every main idea type question expects you to identify the same thing: how to best summarize the passage in one sentence. To identify the correct answer, it may be helpful to think about the passage like a news story: who, where, why, what, and when. Be careful, some answer choices will accurately describe some aspect of the passage, but still not capture its main point.

A few “tricks” could help you to determine the main point of the passage. A quick scan of the questions reveals that the passage has something to do with e-mail, privacy, and the law. While reading, you should have noticed and underlined the last sentence of the first paragraph: “In fact, the question of how private [e-mail] should be has emerged as one of the more complicated legal issues of the electronic age.” This sentence is a nearly complete statement of the main idea. (A) This answer looks promising because it mentions e-mail, privacy, and the law. Do not be fooled. Near the end of the passage, the author briefly mentioned scrambling e-mail messages. However, the author did not focus on the need to scramble e-mails. Disregard this answer. Note, the main idea will not appear, for the first and only time, in the last paragraph of a passage. (B) This answer is also incorrect. The author did not advocate or mention a “best” solution. (C) This answer also looks promising. The author did take into account the difference between e-mail in the public sector and private sector. But, the author did not write that a resolution must take those differences into account. This answer incorrectly suggests that solving the problem is the main idea. (D) * This answer reflects the central elements and theme of the passage. It nearly matches the last sentence of the first paragraph. Also, It does not add any extra information. (E) Again, this answer is concerned with a “best” solution. The author did not mention allowing supervisors to monitor their employees’ communications as a solution, let alone, as a “best” solution.

2. Detail- A detail question is the third most common question type. About a quarter of all questions ask you to find a particular piece of information. It is important to discern exactly what bit of information the question wants. Often you must refer back to the passage to find the information. The answer is in the passage, just waiting for you to grab it. Sometimes, a question will reference a line number or provide a term in quotations. If so, find the line reference or quote and read the sentence(s) before or after it. On the
LSAT, a specific reference is the “X” on a treasure map. Dig around it and you will find what you are looking for.

The specific piece of information we are looking for is, “the reason some people use to oppose the deletion of mail records at government offices.” You may have noted the words “for example” in the second paragraph. That’s a good place to start to search. The second paragraph is about e-mail in government offices and why some people oppose its deletion. (A) Does the government have an unhealthy obsession with secrecy, as this answer suggests? Who cares! The passage contained no reference to an unhealthy government anything. This is obviously wrong, discard it and move on. (B) * On its face, this answer makes good sense. The last sentence of the second paragraph, lines 27-30, stated that opponents of deleting e-mail maintain that the public should have the right to review any documents created by civil servants conducting government business. This seems like the same thing as holding the government accountable. Mark it as a possible right answer. (C) The author wrote that the law requires government offices to keep paper duplicate copies of e-mail messages. The author wrote nothing about a law requiring electronic duplicates. Obviously a wrong answer. Remember, the passage discussed how unclear the law actually is. (D) According to the passage, some people argue that the government should issue guidelines permitting public-sector employees to delete e-mail messages. So it obviously doesn’t have the guidelines yet. (E) The passage recounted an incident between a private-sector supervisor and employees, but not a public-sector supervisor-employee dispute. This is a wrong answer.

3. Miscellaneous/Organization- About one-fourth of reading comprehension questions are the grab-bag type about physical organization, tone, and attitude. Common wording of physical organization type questions includes: “Author uses the 2nd paragraph to...” “The structure of the passage/paragraph...” “Paragraph 4 serves to...” Marking the passage’s main ideas, important arguments, and transition terms provides clues to the structure of the passage. When a question asks for the organization of the passage, quickly refer to your notations for an idea of how the passage is set up.

Referring back to the passage (if necessary), the first paragraph introduced a legal issue. The second and third paragraphs described examples of how the issue has played out in the public sector and private sector. The final paragraph discussed solutions and mentioned scrambling e-mail messages, without endorsing a solution. With this outline in mind, find the choice that most closely reflects it. (A) * This answer closely resembles the outline of the passage’s organization. Mark it as a possible right answer and check to see if another choice is better. (B) The author did not endorse any solution. (C) Unlike this incorrect answer suggests, the passage did not include an analysis of the historical circumstances behind the current debate. It discussed the present situation and recent events. (D) This answer is nearly identical to (B). It, too, is a wrong answer. Again, the author did not argue for a solution. (E) This answer also has the author arguing for a solution. It is also incorrect.

4. Miscellaneous/Attitude- Another miscellaneous type question. Attitude questions are tested about 4% of the time. On an attitude question, you are expected to describe, based on the passage, the author’s stance, beliefs, feelings, outlook, view, opinion, or values, towards the subject, or an aspect of, the passage.

Based on the adjectives and adverbs used by the author, what was his or her attitude towards interception of e-mail. Like most legal writing, this passage was void of emotion or passion. The correct answer choice should reflect the author’s curiosity about the problem and his or her personal detachment from its outcome. (A) Outright disapproval is not personal detachment. This answer is obviously wrong. (B) The author did not express disapproval or support for employers who engage in the interception of e-mail. This answer is clearly incorrect. (C) Nor did the author express support for employees who lose their jobs. (D) * “Intellectual interest in its legal issues,” accurately reflects the author’s attitude toward the interception of e-mail. (E) The author expressed no feeling about the motives behind the practice.

5. Inference- The second most common question type, inference questions appear about 18% of the time. Common wording of inference questions includes: “Which can be inferred...” “The author implies...” “The author included this fact for what reason...” Inference questions are typically the most difficult because, unlike a detail question, the answer is not always expressly stated. These questions have you reason your way to a logical judgment using the facts.
This question asks for the opinion the author would likely have of an easy-to-use encryption system. In the passage (fourth paragraph) the author wrote the following about encoding and decoding: “...unfortunately, such complex codes are likely to undermine the principal virtue of electronic mail; its convenience.” This sentence makes it clear; the author feels encoding and decoding is unfortunate because of its inconvenience. You can safely infer that the author would find easy encryption to be a good thing. (A) Even without reading the passage, you know that this answer is obviously wrong. It defies common sense to suggest that an ultra-quick and easy solution is an unreasonable burden. Also, the author doesn’t state that companies ought to monitor e-mails. (B) “It would significantly reduce the difficulty” posed by the problem. This is very likely the correct answer. Check it against the remaining choices to be certain. (C) This is another obviously wrong answer. It is the only one that mentions “revealing trade secrets to competitors.” When you come across an answer that looks nothing like the others, eliminate it. This is the “sesame street” technique. Also, this has absolutely nothing to do with anything in the passage. (D) The author mentioned encryption as the only guarantee of employee privacy and made no mention regarding expense. So, it is illogical to assume he or she would hold a contrary opinion. This answer is wrong. (E) While the author mentioned “a reasonable expectation of privacy,” there is no basis to conclude that the author would agree with the opinion expressed in this answer. It is also incorrect.

6. Inference- The tricky wording makes it harder to classify: “...Which one of the following hypothetical events is LEAST likely to occur?” You might classify it as a miscellaneous question, but, it looks more like an inference question. Essentially, it asks you to make a conclusion based on all the facts. To find the least likely event, choose the answer choice that is least supported by the circumstantial evidence from the passage. (A) The author pointed out that there is an unsettled debate about whether deleting public-sector workplace e-mail is in the public’s best interest. Because this answer could occur, it is incorrect. (B) A wire-tapping employer would be liable. (C) * According to the passage, it is illegal for government offices to delete the paper documents. So a court would not permit a government office to destroy both the electronic and paper documents. Because this is an unlikely event, it is a good candidate. (D) This event is likely, based on the reading. (E) If the employee was told e-mails would not be monitored, then he or she has a “reasonable expectation” of privacy. Subsequently firing the employee based on the “private” e-mail would violate this “expectation” and make the employer liable.

7. Main Idea- Remember Question 1? It was also a main idea question. The main idea was that the law surrounding electronic mail and privacy in the workplace (public and private sector) remains unresolved. The correct answer choice should approximate the main idea. (A) This answer, unlike the others, does not mention e-mail. Use the sesame street technique, or plain common sense, to eliminate it. Also, there was no “erosion” argument. (B) The author compared the legal status of e-mail in the public and private sector, but focused more on the privacy issue. This answer is possibly correct. (C) The author did not draw an extended analogy between e-mail and other forms of communication. Conversations were only briefly discussed. (D) * This answer, like (B), references e-mail in the public and private sector workplace. It also focuses on the issue of privacy and the complexities surrounding the issue. It is the best choice. (E) The author did not try to explain why courts have ruled the way they have.
Overview of Passage #2- Critical Interest in Greek Homeric Poems

This passage was the second most difficult. Unless you were an English major, and even if you were you are probably unfamiliar with the subject— an evaluation of scholarly criticism of the epic poems ascribed to Homer. Though the passage contained only three paragraphs, it was the longest of the section. Its’ length and the author’s detailed and wordy style made for more difficult reading. Still, as you know, details are not important to doing well. To understand the overall structure of the passage and its main idea is the critical thing.

8. Main Idea- Commonly the passage’s main idea is not encapsulated by a single neat sentence in the first paragraph. This author interspersed the main idea throughout the first paragraph. Ignoring superfluous information helps us find the main idea. You can summarize the passage by taking pieces from three sentences in the first paragraph: “While a surge of critical interest in poems ascribed to Homer has taken place... between roughly 1935-70... something was driving scholars away from the actual works to peripheral issues... rather anything [other] than critical and poetical.” Sometimes you need to cobble together the main idea from pieces of different sentences.

(A) This answer does not mention scholars, critical interest or peripheral issues. It also includes the debatable term “most fruitfully.” These are all good reasons to reject it. (B) This answer restates an aspect from the passage. Yes, the poems may have been the products of an oral tradition. No, this is not the main point of the passage. This is a minor facet. (C) * This answer neatly summarizes the main idea that we have cobbled together. It refers to Homeric poems, resurgence of scholarly (critical) interest in the poetry itself, and non-poetic elements (peripheral issues). It looks like a likely candidate. (D) This answer almost fits the bill. It mentions the resurgence of Homeric poems, scholarly interest, and the work of nonacademic writers (a non-central element). It does not mention peripheral issues (a central element). Also, we can’t say that “most” studies were done by non-academics. (E) This answer does not mention critical interest, resurgence, or peripheral issues. Even if factually true, no way is this the main point.

9. Detail Question- No, this is not an inference question. What was the primary concern of Weil’s and Aurbach’s work? Their names appear in lines 7-8. The information needed to answer the question will be in the same area. (A) Weil and Aurbach were interested in the poetry, not the peripheral issues, or the scholars that studied those issues. (B) * According to the passage, Weil and Aurbach were trying to define the qualities that made the Iliad and Odyssey great poetry. This answer agrees with the passage. (C) They were interested in the specific poetry as poetry, not the history and nature of oral poetry in general. (D) This answer is incorrect. It misstates what the author said about Weil and Aurbach. (E) This answer mentions neither Homer nor Poetry. Aurbach and Weil were utterly unconcerned with technical analyses of academic critics.

10. Inference- This question asks: “The passage suggest which...about scholarship on Homer...since 1970.” In other words, based on what the author has said about scholarship on Homer before 1970, what can you infer about scholarship since 1970? In question 8, you cobbled together the main idea: that scholarship between 1935 and 1970 focused on peripheral issues, not literary art. It is safe to assume that post-1970 scholarship is focused on something other than peripheral issues, the art itself. (A) * This answer is a logical inference. The author suggested that the focus has shifted away from peripheral issues back to literary art. This answer looks good, but make sure it is the best. (B) According to the author, Parry employed intensive analysis. Post-1970 work was a return to form, not a more incisive kind of scholarship. This incorrect answer is unsupported by the passage. (C) Although scholarly emphasis shifted back to the art itself, you cannot infer that it, altogether, rejected the work on peripheral issues. This answer is wrong. (D) If anything, the passage suggested that recent scholars have embraced the work of Weil and Aurbach. (E) The author expressly stated that post-1970 scholarship has emphasized Homer’s unique contribution. It is not an inference; it is an assertion.

11. Inference- Infer the probable reason why the author quoted Alexander Pope. (A) The author never judged the quality of English critics. (B) This answer looks plausible; but ask yourself, is the author trying
to prove a point or merely demonstrate a trend? Also, did any poets emphasize peripheral issues? (C) * This is more plausible than (B). The author tried to illustrate, not prove, that non-poetical emphasis is nothing new. (D) This answer is obviously wrong. The article says nothing about inherent problems rendering Greek into English. This answer looks different than the others, if you are using the sesame street technique. (E) The author is not arguing.

12. Detail- What did the passage state about Milman Parry’s immediate successors? (A) Maybe. (B) This answer restates what the author wrote regarding Parry’s son. (C) This answer goes against all we know from the passage and is clearly wrong. (D) * Maybe. (E) “A revival of Homer’s popularity...” is completely off base. Now compare (A) and (D). What do we know about Milman Parry’s successors? See lines 37-47. The successors ignored the poetry, instead focusing on what oral poetry can and cannot do. This was boring, so the inventive scholars (we can’t tell if they were immediate successors or came later) studied Homer’s archaeological and historical background. (A) “Reconciled” and “concerns” may pose problems. It is hard to decide if either of these match the passage. (D) * Definitely, the immediate successors focused on the limitations of oral poetry.

13. Miscellaneous/Organization- The author had a primary purpose when he or she wrote the passage. Ask yourself, how did the author structure the passage to serve that purpose? In this instance, paragraph one illustrated a scholarly trend; paragraph two discussed its origin; paragraph three discussed its current status. On organization questions, keep the analysis simple. (A) * This answer captures the outline of the article. (B) The author did not propose or advocate a hypothesis. The author likes the focus on poetry. But this is not the hypothesis. (C) The passage mentioned influential authors but it is not structured around the topic. (D) The author presented an analysis of a situation, not a debate. (E) This answer is clearly wrong. The author did not present three solutions, nor a long-standing problem.
Overview of Passage #3 - Intertribalism, Pan-Indian Theory, and Tribalism

This passage addressed a debate regarding the affect of inter-tribal contact on tribal culture. It is unlikely that you are familiar with this specific topic. Still, it is not rocket science. In essence, it is a debate regarding cultural assimilation. In social sciences, terminology is important. So, it is helpful to note important specialized terms. For instance, “Pan-Indian movement,” “Tribalism,” “Intertribalism,” and “Assimilation Theories.” Passage 3 is the most important because it has the most questions. The author of passage 3, unlike 1 and 2, presented an argument and refuted its validity. With these types of passages, pay attention to where the author is coming from.

14. Main Idea- In this instance, the author presented a theory (Pan-Indianism) in the first paragraph and stated the main idea in the second paragraph: “Obviously, a more complex societal shift is taking place than the theory of Pan-Indianism can account for.” (A) Line 7 of the passage stated: “[T]hey suggest that an intertribal movement is now in ascension.” It is a new phenomenon, it has not always been an influence. (B) This incorrect answer restates an argument that the author disagreed with. Clearly it is not the main idea. (C) * Notice, this answer is the opposite of (B). This answer restates the author’s argument. It is correct. (D) According to the passage, intertribalism has had a profound effect on how Native Americans interact with the broader community. This answer is incorrect. (E) Again, like (B), this answer restates the position refuted by the author.

15. Miscellaneous/Organization- Why did the author do this? Refer to lines 47-48 to look for context clues. The author argued that the powwow and rising intertribalism does not signify tribal dissolution. (A) * This answer acknowledges intertribal tendencies at powwows and diminishes their impact on tribalism. It addresses the central debate and supports the author’s position. It is correct. (B) Use of English at powwows is a fact the author cited. But it is not central to author’s argument, it is used as an example. (C) The deliberate distinction between dances may or may not be a recent development. Again, It is not central to the author’s argument. (D) The author focused on borrowing between native American cultures, not between native American and non-native American cultures. This answer is wrong. (E) This answer is obviously wrong. Common sense alone should tell you that a ceremonial gathering of native Americans probably did not originate from non-native American culture.

16. Main Idea- Given what the author said, what can you assume he or she would agree with? (A) * This answer is a summation of the author’s viewpoint. It is a little vague, but it is correct to assume he or she would agree. (B) This answer is the antithesis of the author’s position. We assume he or she would disagree. It is incorrect. (C) This answer contravenes the author. (D) This answer is incorrect. It is the only choice to mention “bias.” (E) This answer also disputes the author’s argument. Instead of weakening their identity, it will strengthen it.

17. Miscellaneous/Organization- The third paragraph is an examination of the Pan-Indian view that the author rejected. (A) The author pointed-out that “there is no evidence,” to support Pan-Indian’s a priori assumption. This answer is clearly wrong. (B) Although they “chafe” at the Pan-Indian classification, the third paragraph is not primarily focused on this issue. (C) At first glance, this answer looks like a good choice. Pan-Indianism did, in fact, evolve from other assimilation theories. But that is not why the author included the third paragraph. (D) This answer is incorrect. The author examined only one, not several, theories. (E) * You have rejected all the other choices and this answer agrees with why the author included paragraph three, see lines 39-40.

18. Miscellaneous/Attitude- (A) The author may be critical of the theory of Pan-Indianism, but not for the reason stated in this answer. (B) What negative characterization? The author did not mention it. This answer is incorrect. (C) Pan-Indianism is a theory. It has no ability to preserve anything, only to explain something. This answer is incorrect. (D) The author was not offended. His tone was fairly calm in discussing why the sociologists are wrong. (E) * This is the correct answer. The author was skeptical that
the theory explained the changes.

19. Inference-  (A) The author did not consider native American customs influence on European American culture. (B) There is a difference between intertribalism and tribalism. (C) * Yes, the author wrote, “Intertribal activities...reinforce native American identity...[against threats] by outside influences.” In light of lines 55-59, it is correct to assume that the author would agree with this answer. (D) Don’t be fooled. The author did not delve into the reasons behind powwows’ resurgence. This is an incorrect answer. (E) Tricky. The author did discuss these factors in lines 11-16. But the author conceded that this was evidence of intertribalism. Then the author minimized the importance of the intertribalism trend by discussing the effect of tribalism.

20. Detail- (A) Since the actions are contained within one tribe, this is tribalism. (B) * This answer mentions sharing cultural elements between tribes. It depicts intertribalism as understood from the passage. (C) Their actions effect and concern the tribe. This is another example of tribalism. (D) Interaction between a tribe and a non-tribal group, by definition, cannot be tribalism or intertribalism. (E) Again, all the interaction takes place within one tribe.

21. Main Idea- This question is very similar to question 14. (A) This answer incorrect, the author was concerned with only one assimilationist theory, Pan-Indianism. (B) The recent revival suggests that intertribalism is a potent force. (C) * This answer is correct. The author challenged the Pan-Indianism claim that tribal identity is dissolving. (D) This answer is incorrect. The author viewed the rise in tribal activity as complimentary to intertribal activity and not a defensive reaction to it. (E) This answer completely contradicts the author’s thesis.
Overview of passage #4- Analytical method versus organicism

As far as doing well on the LSAT, this passage was not your friend. First, its subject matter (methods of scientific study of complex systems), its style, and its organization made for comparatively difficult reading. Second, the passage has only five questions. It was the most difficult and least beneficial of the four. Scanning the question beforehand didn’t yield many clues, but annotating (especially the passage organization) was very helpful.

22. Main Idea- When summarizing an argument, find words like: “hence,” “thus,” “therefore,” “in conclusion.” See lines 54-57: “Hence, organicists offered no valid reason for rejecting the analytical method or for adopting organicism as a replacement for it.” The correct answer should resemble lines 54-57. (A) The passage did not definitively state that 19th century scientists preferred organicism. Even if it had, this choice captures only one aspect of the passage. (B) This is a tempting choice but it is not the best one. It correctly states one of the important reasons behind the author’s argument. It does not offer a complete picture. Do not confuse a partially correct answer with the whole correct answer. (C) This answer is similar to (B). It too, is a partially correct incorrect answer. It only covers paragraph three. (D) * This answer is more complete, covering the gist of paragraphs three and four (faulty theory) and five (misrepresentation). (E) This answer is accurate but incomplete.

23. Detail- (A) * According to lines 4-6, “[C]ritics of [the analytical] method claimed that when a system’s parts are isolated its complexity tends to be lost.” This answer agrees with lines 4-6. (B) Both organicism and the analytical method assume, without objection, that a complex system is, in fact, divisible. (C) According to lines 45-47, proponents of the analytical method did determine the laws applicable to the whole system. This incorrect answer misstates the passage. (D) The analytic method did not view parts as more important than the whole. This answer is incorrect. (E) Proponents of the analytic method did not deny that entities entered into relationships. This answer is incorrect.

24. Detail- This is detail question with a twist. The correct answer will pose an unanswerable question; the answer is not found in the passage. (A) The passage provides information in lines 35-41 that answers the question posed by this choice. (B) This question is obviously answerable. This answer is incorrect. (C) This is a wrong answer. The passage answers this question in lines 25-26. (D) This is a wrong answer, see lines 15-17. (E) * This is the correct answer. The passage never discusses the advantages of separating the parts.

25. Inference- The correct answer will describe the view the author has attributed to scientists who use the analytic method. (A) True, the analytic method looks at component parts, but not in “full isolation.” This answer is unsupported by the text. (B) * This is the correct answer. The author ascribed this view to those who use the analytic method (lines 45-48). (C) This answer is incorrect. Determining the laws that govern a system is the first step, not the second (lines 44-47). (D) This answer is incorrect– it describes the organicist view. (E) This answer is incorrect. The analytic method recognizes the difference between defining and accompanying characteristics.

26. Detail- On what principle did the author base his argument against the theory of internal relations? Refer to the fourth paragraph. (A) This answer is wrong. It accurately states a principle of the analytic method. (B) * This answer summarizes the principle underlying the author’s argument (lines 34-36). (C) This one is tricky because it correctly states an argument in favor of the analytic method. However, the theory of internal relations is not a method to study complex systems. It is a theory upon which organicism relied. This answer is incorrect. (D) This answer, like (C), states an argument in favor of the analytic method. It is incorrect. (E) This answer is incorrect. If anything, it would support the theory of internal relations.
Analysis of the Questions:

1. Psychiatrist - This is a miscellaneous identify a conclusion question. Unlike questions that ask you to make a conclusion, this is a not a common question type. It is similar to, but not as common as “Main Point” questions you see in the Reading Comprehension. You will identify the conclusion of the argument. You can ignore the facts, assumptions, and anything else in the passage. All you need to find is the conclusion, which has already been made. (A) * This seems to match the conclusion, “These findings will promote compassion…” Let’s see if any of the other answer choices are a better match. (B) This is a fact in the passage, it is not the conclusion drawn by the psychiatrist. (C) Nowhere in the passage does it say that neurochemical imbalances are the main determinants of mental behavior, only that they are a determinant. This is a false answer. (D) This looks interesting, but we find this is a restatement of a fact. (E) This may be true, but it is a much broader conclusion than (A). So (A) * is the correct answer.

2. ! No one wants - This is a parallel reasoning question. Ouch, it is painful to have one so early in the section. You definitely should have skipped it. The first recommended step for most students in our classes is to skip parallel reasoning questions, leaving them for the end if time permits. Even if you are a real hotshot at these questions, they require more than the 84 seconds you can devote to them.

   The second step is to eliminate or disfavor certain answer choices. If an answer choice deals with the same subject or uses many of the same words as the passage, you should suspect that the answer choice is wrong. The test writer uses similar language in the wrong answer choices in order to capture the desperate test-taker who chooses the similarly worded choice because it looks familiar. For that reason alone, choices (D) and (E) are automatically suspect because they discuss “contracts” and “jobs.” You cannot yet eliminate them, but you can disfavor them by looking at them last. The more similar the wording, the more comfortable you are in eliminating a choice.

   Remember that we are not critiquing the argument, we only want to find the argument that has the most similar structure. If there is any flaw in this argument, then we must find an answer with a similar flaw.

   Usually the third step is to use a simple diagram to chart out the passage, but that is unnecessary here. Here Joshua wants the job more than anyone, but is not applying for it. The passage concludes that no one else will apply for the job, no matter what the salary. The flaw should be obvious, just because the person who wants the job the most does not apply, this does not mean that no one else will apply. Remember, we want to mimic this reasoning, not correct it.

   Fourth, examine your remaining answer choices. Pay attention to any flaws. (A) This has a flaw, but it is not the flaw we want. It says that since Beth has not found any computer errors, the errors must be in the rest of the program. This differs from the original passage in assuming that there are errors in the rest of the program. (B) This is correct reasoning, not flawed reasoning. Move on. (C) * says that since Manfred, who has the strongest motive for purchasing the land (“no one wants this job as much as Joshua does”) and therefore, no matter what Anna does she will not find a buyer (“there will not be any applicants, no matter how high the salary this is being offered.”) This uses the same type of flawed reasoning as the passage and is the correct answer. Quickly examine (D). This is the opposite of the passage. Here the most interested person withdraws, so the others will gladly step forward. (E) Too bad for Paul, but this is not the flawed pattern we want.

   Conclusion. If you had done this question first, it would have slowed you down, hurting you later in the section.

3. Many people - This is a make a conclusion question. This is a fairly common question type. You will take all the facts in the passage and make a solid conclusion. The question stem does not always use this exact wording, in fact, sentence completion is quite rare.
When making a conclusion, there is a delicate balancing act. First, don’t choose an answer choice that is logically possible but is not supported by the facts you were given. Second, don’t choose the answer choice that repeats the facts you were given in the passage. Third, if you have more than one possible conclusion, choose the answer that is narrowest in scope.

Before getting into the answers, what can we conclude? As a person loses weight, their fat cells spill cholesterol into the bloodstream. (A) * This is pretty close to our tentative conclusion. Mark it as a possibility and check the other answers. (B) There are no facts to support a conclusion about “faster” weight loss, so we can immediately eliminate this answer choice. (C) Again, there are no facts to support this conclusion. (D) This answer is false based on the facts given in the passage and can immediately be eliminated as an answer choice. (E) This answer is false from the facts given and can be eliminated as an answer choice. The passage states that the level of cholesterol in the bloodstream will increase rather than decrease. So (A) * is the correct answer.

4. Advances in photocopying - This is our first strengthening/weakening question. The LSAT loves to ask you to strengthen or weaken a conclusion made in the passage. Testing for this skill makes sense, since many lawyers must routinely strengthen their own argument or attempt to weaken another lawyer’s argument. This is a very common question type; it pays to get good at dealing with them efficiently.

The argument is pretty simple. Photocopying allows criminals to counterfeit paper currency. A more expensive ink printing technique would make it easy to detect counterfeit currency. (A) * This would make the argument stronger if true. If the experts necessary to detect the microprinting are pricey, then this would negate the fact that the ink technique is expensive. (B) This answer choice is off the mark. Although the passage discusses anti-counterfeiting measures, it really does not discuss how well known the techniques are. (C) This statement is irrelevant to the argument presented. We care about the cost, not the steps. (D) Again, this statement is irrelevant to the argument presented. (E) This actually weakens the conclusion rather than strengthening it. So (A) * is correct.

5. Advances in photocopying - See the discussion above. This is another strengthening/weakening question, this time asking us to undermine or weaken the argument presented. Try inserting “But this is wrong because…” in front of your favorite choice. (A) This actually strengthens the argument. Eliminate this answer choice and move on. (B) * This weakens the argument. Mark this answer and check the rest. (C) This would strengthen the argument for the special ink. (D) There was no discussion of who the counterfeiters are. (E) This is a neutral fact.

6. One test - This is our first assumption question. Depending on the LSAT, this is the third most common logical reasoning question type. A good technique is to ask yourself while you are reading the facts, "where does the speaker make a ‘jump’?" Or, "how did the speaker get from these facts to this conclusion?"

The facts are as follows: To test for TB, inject proteins. If infected, immune system attacks the TB. This causes a rash. (Place assumption here.) Conclusion: If get a rash, then have TB. Now it is probably clear that the assumption is that nothing else will cause the rash. (A) This seems like a tempting answer, but is really much more broad than the argument. (B) It is only because it is injected that is causes a rash. You can eliminate this answer and move on. (C) * This seems like a good answer. This assumption would allow the physician to conclude that if an irritation developed at the injection site, the patient definitely has the tuberculosis bacteria. (D) So what? You can quickly eliminate this answer and move on. The passage does not contain any facts asserting that people will contract tuberculosis as a result of the injection. (E) This is an initially possible. The body’s immune system would have to recognize the bacteria if an irritation were to develop. But we have no information about quantities. Therefore, the correct answer is (C) *.

7. Generations - This is another miscellaneous identify the conclusion question. It is very unusual to have one, much less two of these in the same section. This is similar to identifying the main point in a Reading Comprehension question. (A) This seems like it could be true. But then we see that the passage differentiates between the importance of the causes, while this choice says that they are “equal.” (B) This
is very tempting. (C) * This seems to be the correct answer. The passage discusses the meaning of the term “cause” and how “cause” is used in history classes. This is an even better answer than (B), focusing more on the direct language of the passage. Let’s check the remaining answers to make sure that there is not a better choice. (D) This is a further conclusion based on the facts presented, but not the conclusion that was presented in this passage. (E) This fact may be true, but this does not restate the conclusion. We can therefore eliminate this answer choice. Is (B) correct? We see that the passage really focused on the term “cause” and defining that term. So while (B) is a defensible conclusion, it is not a restatement of the conclusion of this passage. Therefore (C) * is the correct answer.

8. Toddlers- This is a miscellaneous question type. The number of miscellaneous question in this section is unusually high. Here we must determine what the argument is and then make a generalization from that argument. This is slightly more difficult than your typical identify the conclusion question because you are not merely identifying the conclusion, but rather are expected to extrapolate from that conclusion a generalization.

   What is this passage concluding? It says that toddlers are not malicious when they bite other people and gives an example as to why the toddler feels that their behavior is acceptable and what can be accomplished through biting.

   (A) * Biting is a way for toddlers to try to solve problems. This is very similar to the example given where the toddler may bite in order to get the toy. This generalization seems to closely conform to the argument stated. Let’s mark it and move on. (B) There is no information given in the argument statement relating to getting attention from adults. In fact, adults are not even mentioned in the argument given. (C) This statement again deals with toddlers and how they are viewed by adults. The argument gives no indication of any feeling toddlers have with respect to the adults around them. Skip this answer and move on. (D) Although this is probably a true statement, it does not relate to the argument given. Skip this answer and move to the last possible answer choice. (E) The argument does state that toddlers may bite others to get the toy, but the passage doesn’t say if this is effective.

9. Consumer advocate- This is the first flawed reasoning question that we have seen. This question type is tested about 8% of the time. There are only a few reasoning flaws to look out for, one of which is the confusing of cause and effect. Here, we are asked to figure out what the argument actually is. The consumer advocate argues that since the virus caused little damage that the software sellers were sneakily using the threat to sell many anti-virus programs. Why is this argument flawed? Well, the anti-virus programs were sold to prevent damage from the virus. Maybe more computers were not destroyed because the anti-virus programs that were sold actually did their jobs and prevented the virus from destroying many computer systems.

   Now, let’s evaluate the answer choices knowing the flaw in the consumer advocate’s argument. (A) This is not true. The argument does not simply restate its conclusion. A word to the wise, this is almost never the flaw. (B) The argument does not acknowledge that anti-virus programs might in fact protect against viruses “other than” the particular one described, so this is not a flaw, it is immaterial to the consumer advocate’s argument. This answer was put in there to trick you. Think about it, even if this is a correct statement, would the inclusion of that in the argument strengthen it? No, therefore this is the incorrect answer. (C) Although this uses the cause and effect buzzwords, you can’t make this choice match up with the text of the passage. This is not correct. It is slightly wordy, so make sure not to allow the wordiness to trick you. (D) The passage uses strong language. But is this language actually inflammatory? I would not say that it goes to that level. Some evidence was provided, there were only 1000 cases of damage. (E) * This is true and correct. As we said earlier, the argument does overlook the possibility that the anti-virus programs did work and may have prevented the virus from causing damage. This was the inverse of a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is a big flaw in the argument and is therefore the correct answer.

10. Insects- This is another strengthening/weakening question. Here we are asked to find which new fact would strengthen the argument. This is a long one. The facts are: insects like UV patterns. Insects like UV-reflecting webs. Therefore, insects like UV patterns of these webs. (A) Not reflecting UV might
weaken the argument. At best this choice is neutral since it discusses other webs. Eliminate this answer and move on. (B) This doesn’t relate much to the argument. (C) This may be relevant, and might slightly strengthen the argument. Let’s mark this, but see if there is a better answer. (D) This would weaken the argument. Something else besides UV is attracting them. Eliminate this answer and move on. (E) * Bingo! These facts, if true, would strongly support the conclusion about UV attracting insects.

11. Habitat Conservation Plan- This is an argument structure question. What is the general flow of the argument? First, you need to know the conclusion. It says that Habitat Conservation Plans essentially keep everyone happy, both environmentalists and developers by getting some compromises. Now examine the answer choices to determine which choice closely meets that conclusion. (A) Although the argument given is saying that compromise is good, it didn’t say the environmentalists should simply give up. We can keep this as a possibility and see if there is a better answer. (B) While developers may ignore some laws, the passage doesn’t recommend this. This is off target. (C) This is the complete opposite of the statement given above. The argument is promoting compromise and keeping everyone happy, while this is the opposite. Disregard this answer choice. (D) * This answer accurately captures the gist of the argument. Laws should be fashioned like the Habitat Conservation Plans in order to reconcile any disputes between the developers and environmentalists. (E) This is a “sort of” answer choice, and is a conclusion that probably could be drawn from the facts, but (D) is closer to mirroring the actual argument and conclusion.

12. It has long- Another assumption question. The facts are: no anthracosaurs have been found in rocks older than 300 million years old, but lizards have been found in rocks 340 million years old, and lizards could only evolve from a species that was present before lizards. Therefore, Lizards did not evolve from anthracosaurs. The correct assumption will focus on the 300 vs. 340 million year gap. (A) * This is a good answer. This assumption would make our argument true. Let’s mark this assumption and check the rest of the answers. (B) This answer is the opposite of (A). When two choices are similar in phrasing, it is likely that one of them is the correct answer. (C) & (D) The use of “some” makes these too general to serve as an assumption. (E) It is not necessary to assume this.

13. Numismatist- Some test-takers like the two-question format, others don’t, but the questions types are just like those in the rest of the test so it should not make any real difference to your performance. This first question is a make a conclusion question, an inference is the same thing as a conclusion. The facts are: gold coins minted from gold mined in Senegal were never refined, so the gold content was 92%. Other gold was refined and the coins made from refined gold had a higher gold content. (A) We don’t know about weights. (B) * This is true and a good answer. Let’s mark it and check the rest of the choices. (C) The monetary value of the coins is not discussed. We can immediately eliminate this answer choice. (D) We can’t make this conclusion, and it may actually contradict our facts. Again, we can eliminate this answer choice. (E) This seems like this is a good conclusion too. Now we have to find the best conclusion. The passage does support the conclusion that non-Senegalese/ <92% gold was used to mint coins. (E) “Only” seems restrictive. Maybe some 80% gold was used to make coins. The passage doesn’t prohibit this. Therefore (B) * is the correct answer choice.

14. Numismatist- See the discussion above. This is a very unusual make a conclusion question type. The reason it is so unusual is that it adds a new fact in the question stem. Take all the facts in the passage, plus the new fact and make a solid conclusion. Before getting into the answers, what can we logically conclude? Gold coins minted from Senegalese gold had a fixed gold content, while other coins had varying gold content. (A) * This is pretty close to the conclusion we just drew. Make sure to still check the other answers to verify that this is the best answer. (B) Nothing about silver coins is mentioned in the passage. You can immediately eliminate an answer choice that supplies additional facts. (C) Even if the mints could determine the gold content, the traders could not. (D) This contradicts the new fact, it is not a conclusion. (E) Again, nothing is mentioned here regarding the making jewelry. Eliminate this answer choice.
15. Some plants- This is another classic strengthening/weakening the argument question. Here we are asked to undermine the reasoning by adding a new fact.
(A) This would seem to undermine the conclusion, mark it. (B) This is goofy. The focus is on the plants, not the temperature that people find comfortable. (C) This is off key. It is a given fact that both are growing. This is a technical-type answer that may attract many LSAT takers. Watch out for these types of answers. (D) * This is but is correct. The difference in the air temperatures explains the apparent discrepancy. High leaves and low blossoms, if they had different air temperatures, would not help us determine if a thermometer, is accurate, whether it was placed up high, down low, or in-between. (E) The type of thermometer used is irrelevant, since the whole point is to determine accuracy. (A) is wrong because it contradicts the given facts, which is not permitted. Anyway, maybe someone brought a rhododendron outside from their green house, making this contradiction irrelevant.

16. Political scientist- This is another assumption question. This was a hard one. Why? Maybe because the subject covers political theories and uses very wordy and difficult language, which are not the strong points for everybody. I would definitely recommend possibly skipping this question, especially if you are running short on time, especially since the words of the argument are difficult to piece together. First, we must identify the conclusion, and then identify an assumption on which that conclusion depends. The conclusion is that people outside the university have a role in making the theories understandable. Now, let’s go through the answer choices and decide which is an assumption on which the conclusion depends. (A) This touches on the scenario given, talking about people from outside academic settings. But if you look at the argument, it is not the people outside of academic settings who are instrumental in social structure change, but rather are interpreting what the academic people say for those outside of the academic setting. There is no assignment of importance needed. (B) This is not saying that those within the academic settings are attempting to change existing social structures, but simply that this happens. (C) This is incorrect. The argument does not say that those outside academic settings SHOULD be left out of the initial formulation of political theories, just that they often are. Skip this answer and move on. (D) “Gain” is not at all relevant to the conclusion. An answer choice you can easily eliminate. (E) * This is correct. This explains why the conclusion is correct. It says that those in academic settings do not write in a straightforward manner.

17. Nicotine- A resolve the discrepancy question, with an extra twist. Four answers will resolve the discrepancy and one will either do a poor job of resolving the paradox, will be neutral, or will deepen the paradox. Remember that we are essentially finding the worst answer choice rather than the best answer choice. Make sure to carefully read question stems. Do not lose points because you rushed!

What is the argument? The facts are: nicotine causes heart attacks and high blood pressure, but those who only smoke have a higher incidence of heart attacks and high blood pressure than those who only chew tobacco. This is a discrepancy because both smokers and chewers are exposed to equal nicotine, yet smokers have more heart attacks and higher blood pressure. Our answer will choice will fail to explain away this discrepancy. (A) This is a very good explanation as to why heart attacks and high blood pressure are lower in chewers. We can eliminate this answer. (B) Again, this is a good explanation as to why heart attacks and high blood pressure are lower in tobacco chewers. We can eliminate this answer. (C) This is a good explanation as to why heart attacks and high blood pressure are lower in tobacco chewers. Healthier diets would explain this discrepancy. We can eliminate this answer. (D) * This discusses cancer, which is way off the subject. (E) This is a good explanation as to why high blood pressure is in lower incidence in tobacco chewers. We can therefore eliminate this answer as well.

18. President- This is a flaw in the reasoning question. This question type is the fourth-most common question type. We are asked to identify the flaw in the president’s reasoning. To do this, it is necessary to know the common reasoning flaws.

The president reasons that it is necessary to either reduce planned expansion or eliminate less profitable operations, so as to prevent bankruptcy. There are many options that he does not consider, like increasing sales. (A) Assuming the need for the survival of the company is not a flaw in the company president’s reasoning. It is logical that he would want the company to survive. (B) This is incorrect, the
president is attempting to figure out the alternatives to declaring bankruptcy. (C) While the president says that the decreased demand is the cause for the decrease in profits for this year, the president does not say this is always the case. (D) This is irrelevant. The amount of the decrease in profits is not what is at issue, rather, the president is concerned with any further decrease in profits. (E) * This is correct. The president should think of other ways to increase in profits as we stated before.

19. Mammalian species- This is a make a conclusion question, with a twist. Here the facts will support four of the five conclusions. This question is difficult because it is backwards, giving you the conclusion and then asking you to find the argument that it LEAST serves as evidence for. This is also very difficult. Typically we look for the best answer, here you want the worst answer. Do not let this trip you up. Simply read the answer choices with the goal in the back of your head.

Now let’s evaluate the different answer choices. (A) This is incorrect. The statements about mammalian development would definitely support the fact that young mammals will play games where they are engaging in mock flight, developing necessary survival skills. (B) * This seems to be a good answer. If you really look at the statements, there is nothing in the fact statements that indicates anything with respect to non-mammalian species. Let’s mark this answer and evaluate the other answer choices. (C) Mark this answer choice. (D) Again, this is a statement that is closely supported by the fact statements given. Do not forget that you are looking for the statement that would LEAST support the argument rather than would BEST support the answer. (E) This is a statement that is supported by the fact statement given. (C) It is hard to see how this choice is supported by the passage, but (B) goes much further afield from the facts, so it is the least supported by the facts.

20. Physicist- We see an argument is vulnerable to criticism question. These are tested about 5% of the time. This question type is similar to flawed reasoning questions. This is a very difficult question because it discusses scientific theory. Many LSAT takers allow the science to trip them up. Do not focus on the science, only on the argument that is being made by the Physicist.

What argument does the Physicist make? The facts are: in determinism, each event is caused by an earlier event. It is impossible to know complete state of universe. Therefore, determinism is false. (A) This is too focused on the science and does not get to the heart of the physicist’s argument. (B) This choice contradicts itself, but is not the Physicist’s flaw. (C) Don’t focus on the science, rather on the argument presented. You should be able to easily eliminate these types of questions. (D) * This makes sense. It is directly undermining one of the reasons that the physicist gives for basing his conclusion that determination is false. Just because you don’t, or can’t, know it doesn’t mean it is not true. (E) Again, this answer contradicts itself, but does not address the Physicist.

21. If this parking- We see another make a conclusion question. Now do you see how important these question-types are? This one seemed hard, probably because it is more ‘pure logic’ then most of us like. Focus on the analysis. The facts are: if faculty, modify. If students, then new one. Will be unpopular with one group. (A) There is nothing that is given to support a conclusion about “popularizing” the parking policy. (B) This again is not correct. Also, the term reduce its popularity is not given in the original passage, the term used is unpopular. It is either “popular” or “unpopular” but not “somewhat unpopular.” (C) Again, reducing popularity is not at issue, whether the parking policy is unpopular or popular is what is at issue. (D) This completely contradicts the facts. Eliminate this answer and completely disregard it as a possible answer choice. (E) * This is true. If the parking policy is popular with the faculty, we know that it will be unpopular with the students. The facts say that if the policy is unpopular with the students, like in this case, then we should adopt a new policy. Therefore, if the policy is popular with the faculty, it will be unpopular with the students, and we should adopt a new parking policy. This is therefore the correct answer. Tough, but doable.

22. An absurd idea- This is the second parallel reasoning question of this section. Remember, do not focus on whether the reasoning given is correct. Regardless if the reasoning in the argument is correct or incorrect, you are to find the reasoning that matches it. So if the reasoning is incorrect, you must find the
same incorrect reasoning, and if the reasoning is correct, find the same correct reasoning in the answers. This question type deals exclusively with patterns. Watch for and identify the pattern in the original analysis and find that pattern in the answer choices. These are very difficult and time-consuming questions. If you are running short on time, especially since this is towards the end of the section, skip the question, move on, and if you have time go back and answer the question. If you do skip the question, make sure you at least fill in an answer on your answer sheet, even if it is just a guess.

Diagramming this argument: Dumb to say that if merely not supporting, then means are prohibiting. For example, it is prohibited unless supported. In diagram form. A then B. B then A.

(A) * Dumb to say that if not arrested, then means not breaking the law. For ex. If break law get arrested. A then B. B then A.

(B) Dumb to say that if not arrested, then means not breaking the law. For ex. If get arrested has broken law. A then B. A then B.

(C) Dumb to say that if grant then successful. For ex. No success without grant. This is really close to the argument.

(D) Dumb to say that if grant then successful. For ex. No grant means no success. A then B. A then B.

(E) Dumb to say that if grant then successful. For ex. No research without grant. A then B. C then A.

23. Politician- This is another strengthening question. As you can see, this is an extremely important question type and it is important to be able to correctly analyze these arguments. Notice that three choices use required and two use sufficient. (A) This is a possibility. (B) This does not support, let’s leave it. (C) * This would strengthen the argument. If a measure (tax) is required to solve a problem, then it should be adopted. This would greatly strengthen the politician’s argument. Try inserting it in front of the conclusion. (D) & (E) The use of the word “sufficient” does not support the argument as much as “required” in (C). (A) So why is this wrong? It is hard to distinguish between “if” and “only if.” “Only if” rules out raising taxes for other reasons. This goes beyond the limited scope of the argument.

24. Trade official- An assumption question. The argument the trade official makes is that since there is a high demand in our country for the agricultural imports from Country X, therefore it is important that we continue to import regardless of the fact that Country X deserves economic retribution. (A) This may be a true fact. It is not a principle, not is it a conclusion. (B) Keeping products available domestically is more important. (C) This may be the correct answer. But, the language is a little strong, using the word “never.” Mark this answer as a possibility and check the other answers. (D) The argument makes the opposite assumption. (E) * This assumption recommends balancing the factors, which the trade official does. This answer is also less strident than (C). Therefore, this is the correct answer.

25. Jack’s aunt- This is a strengthening question. The phrasing is odd, but the objective is to add a new fact, or principle, to make Jack’s conclusion stronger. The facts are long, but Jack is acting for the greater good. Justify his acts. (A) This sounds good, but really does not require Jack disregard his aunt’s request. As a family member, his duty to do as she wanted would take priority over other duties. (B) This does not justify Jack’s actions, and would provide the opposite result. (C) This principle makes sense, but does not explain Jack’s actions. Here, Jack would not be harming George, he simply would not be benefitting George. (I doubt George sees it that way.) (D) * This seems to be the correct answer. Here, Jack will be benefiting his family and not hurting George. (E) This was not the reasoning that justifies Jack’s acts. A good lawyer should be able to distinguish between harm and not benefit.
A brief review of the puzzle game strategies:

The strategy to the puzzle section is the same no matter which type of puzzle you must answer. First read the setup paragraph. Before you start reading the conditions, think about what type of diagram is needed. If you are uncertain, skimming the conditions should help. Next read the conditions in detail, but before you start the actual questions, take a second to look for relationships that are logical conclusions based on the conditions. For example, if the rule is “G immediately proceeds Y” and this is a line diagram with 5 spaces, GY will always need two consecutive spaces, G can never be in the fifth space, etc. By making sure that you understand what the relationships mean, they will come to you easier, later. Pay special attention to spatial relationships.

The last step before starting the questions is to fill in any “must” relationships in your starting graph. This includes those that are possibilities! If the rule is “either G or Y must be chosen for the trip” (notice placement order is not important here) then \([G/Y]\) is a must relationship for one of the spaces in your diagram. Now you may start your first question.

Each question also has a set pattern you should follow. After reading the question, use any new information, combined with the original conditions, to fill in the diagram as much as possible. Then start through the answers. If the diagram does not clearly answer the question, go through your conditions. Sometimes one condition will clearly be the one that applies. Great! Start with that condition! If not, or if all are important, work through them systematically. This is faster than randomly looking for the correct relationships in the answers. Only if all else fails should you manually plug the answers into the diagram to see what results. This usually takes the most time, and does not immediately orient you to the proper conditions. However, when no relationship is clear to you, this will work. This is a last resort, not a test strategy! Stick with the pattern and you will work faster and more accurately. While this takes time, it will be made up by not getting stuck as often and by increasing the number you answer correctly.

Remember that there can never be more than one correct answer. If you have more than one choice left, you have missed something. If so, work through the conditions again, paying special attention to the unstated relationships that logically result from the conditions. These are the focus of the test. Those that become good at spotting the unstated relationships have a great advantage. The LSAT is not testing you ability to see the explicit relationships, rather the implicit ones.

Question Set Difficulty:

The first and fourth sets are the easiest of this set. Set two is very difficult, as the diagram is not very helpful, and tracking the interrelation of the three subgroups takes a great deal of effort. Set three is somewhat challenging as you are tracking two things.
Overview of puzzle set #1- Planting Trails

Two committees must be filled from a group of seven volunteers (F/G/H/J/K/L/M). The rules governing them are:

Condition 1: At least three people per committee
Condition 2: F not with K
Condition 3: If K is selected, J is with K
Condition 4: M must be selected
Condition 5: Min. of one person in common

There is a great deal of flexibility here. There is a minimum of three per committee, and no explicit maximum. Everybody may be placed, or everybody may not be placed. Members can serve on both committees, or neither. Examination of the conditions does not reveal many unstated relationships. Conditions 2 & 3 can be combined to read F not with KJ, but notice F can be with J, without K. Beyond this, there are no real exclusions. Therefore we don’t know how many people are on which committee. This leads to a very general diagram. We can use subset notation to keep track of the few conditions we have, and use a simple box, or line, to place the finished product. (Figure 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>M(1 or 2)</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planting Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails Committee</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. When there are no new conditions, turn to the base diagram and work through the conditions, eliminating those choices that violate the conditions. The easiest way to do condition violator answer elimination is to take each condition in order and eliminate the violating answer choice. So in this case you would first eliminate the choices that did not show at least three members in a committee. Next you would eliminate any choice that showed F and K in the same committee. (A) This violates condition 4, as M is not selected. (B) * Correct, this is a possible combination. (C) Sorry, this did not put J with K, condition 3. (D) This violates condition 1. (E) Nope, F does not get placed with K, condition 2.

2. Plugging in the new information, we get Figure 2. Based on this, who can K replace without causing problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>M(1 or 2)</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planting Committee</td>
<td>F, H, L, M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails Committee</td>
<td>G, H, J</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now, F can’t work with K. So, K can’t be on planting unless she replaces F. However, K also requires J; thus, both conditions 2 and 3 will be met if K is on trails instead. This gives us G and H to replace, but don’t forget condition 5’s requirement that at least one person sit on both committees. H is that person, so only G can be replaced. (A) Sorry, but this forgets condition 3. (B) * Correct. (C) No, if K replaced H on trails no single member would be on both committees, or if K replaced H on planting and trails this would pair F with K on planting. Either way is invalid. (D) Nope, J must be with K. (E) Lastly, M must be used at least once, condition 4.

3. There are no restrictions on G, H, or L, so all three can serve on both committees. So there are exactly three members that are on both committees. A quick glance through the conditions or the diagram reminds us that M must be used at least once. Thus, for the committees to satisfy the rules, the trails committee must, at a minimum, consist of G, H, L, and M. (A) No, this is incorrect. (B) Same analysis. (C) Condition 4 requires that M be on trails, so the committees do not have the same number of people. (D) *
Correct, the addition of M makes the trails committee larger, by one person. (E) No, we are not maximizing the total number on trails. We want to find out what, at a minimum, must be true.

4. Well, K must be paired with J. This makes exactly three, KJL, for the planting committee. Since M must be selected, there is a minimum of four people, KJLM, on the trails committee. Beyond this, condition 2 means that F cannot be selected for either committee. G and H are available, but not required, to be placed on the trails committee. We have accounted for everyone. (A) and (B) No, F cannot be on either committee, since K is on both. (C) & (D) J must be with K and L on planting, the addition of anyone else would mean more than three people. (E) * Yes, M must be selected and there is no room for M on the planting committee.

5. This one was tricky. Remember, the only exclusionary relationship is no F with K. The five others can be selected without conflict. So, that gives us: 5 + 1 (either F/K) = 6. (D) * This is the correct choice. If you picked (C), it was because you placed JMLGH on both committees, and then F on one committee and K on the other. But, neither F nor K must be used. So you could have KJMLGH (or FJMLGH) on both committees. This would make 6 members in common. (E) There cannot be seven members in common, since F and K are mutually exclusive.
Overview of puzzle set # 2- Guides and Tourists

This is a difficult puzzle, no doubt about it. There is a great deal of information, and it is hard to determine the correct diagram. There are six tourists (H/I/K/L/M/N) and four guides (V/X/Y/Z). The problem here is that this group of tourists is from Babylon. Thus, they speak a combination of French, Spanish, Turkish, and Russian. The guides speak up to two of the languages. This big mass of information is summarized and re-arranged as a sub-set in figure 1.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
V (f) & X (t \text{ or } s) & Z (s \text{ or } r) & Y (f \text{ or } t) \\
L & H & I & \\
K* \\
\text{if } X, M \text{ is } f
\end{array}
\]

Fig. 1

Notice that three of tourists are already assigned to two guides. Per the opening paragraph, all guides must be assigned at least one tourist. Thus, of the three remaining tourists, a minimum of one must go to V and a minimum of one must go to X. This extra conclusion is critical to solving the questions. It would appear that the remaining one tourist is free to float between all four guides.

6. Get our your finger and draw imaginary lines. Which can’t be true? (A) H can speak t, and K, if assigned to X, can speak t. Thus this is possible. (B) If K is linked to V, then K speaks f. Then M can be linked to Y, who speaks f. So this is possible! (C) * No, only Z speaks r, and if K and M were to be linked to Z, then only N would be left to be linked to V and X, so K and M cannot speak r, since this would underutilize V and X. (D) Again, both V and X speak f, and they both need someone from (K/M/N) to be assigned to them, so this is possible! (E) If K and N were assigned to X, who speaks s, then M would be linked to V, which is acceptable under the conditions.

7. Now, a quick look at the answer choices should key you into the fact that this is an occupancy question. After V and X are assigned their minimum of one tourist, from K/M/N, this leaves one tourist free to join anyone. (A) * True! Since Z starts with only one, even with the assignment of the one floater, Z can at most have 2 people. (B) X must have at least one, but the floater could also be assigned to X, bringing him to two tourists. (C) Y already has two people, but the floater could bring Y to three. (D) V must have one, but could have two. (E) Again, Z must have one, but could have two!

8. Which of the following must be false? (A) Sorry, V and X both need assignments, and condition 3 doesn’t apply in this case. Therefore, this can be true. (B) * This cannot be true. Y and Z already have assignments. This would leave two guides and only one tourist. (C) This is a trick choice! Condition 2 already assigns L to Z so this was a given; thus the only new assignment is M to Z. This leaves us with two guides and two tourists, which is valid. (D) This leaves N for X, and condition 3 doesn’t apply. (E) This leaves N for V, and condition 3 doesn’t apply.

9. We will have to do a lot of work to get our answer. L speaks either s or r. First, if K speaks s, he can be assigned to either X or Z. Either way, V(f) must be linked to either N or M. If K speaks r, he can only be assigned to Z. This means V(f) and X(t or s) must be guides for M and N, we don’t know precisely which tourist is linked with which guide. (A) No, if K is assigned to X, then M must speak f and N can speak anything. (B) No, this is the second possibility outlined above, but it certainly isn’t a “must.” (C) No, again, this is one of two possibilities. (D) Well, under both possibilities, V still needs an assignment, but there only needs to be one tourist who speaks f. (E) * Correct! Under both possibilities, V still needs an assignment, and V only speaks f. See figure 2.
10. This one is a tough one. Let’s maximize the number of t speakers. The way to do that is to use up as few tourists as possible on the non-t speaking guides. X and Y speak t. H and I are assigned to Y, so let’s figure that they speak t. L speaks s or r. Of the remaining three unassigned tourists, one must be assigned to V, who speaks f, and one to X (who speaks t). The one assigned to X and the one tourist who is left could both speak t. However, here we are told that N and L both speak the same language. Thus, they are limited to only s or r. The person assigned to V must speak f. This means of the three unassigned tourists, two of them must speak languages other than t. This leaves only one of those three who can therefore speak t. Phew! (A) No, one of the three unassigned tourists can speak t as well. (B) * Correct! (C) No, the new rule of L and N speaking the same language prevents this. (D) & (E) No, there could never be more than four! Of the six tourists, two (one of whom is L) must be assigned to guides that do not speak t.

11. X has no required assignments. If two of the three unassigned tourists are assigned to X, then the remaining one must be assigned to V. If K is assigned to X, M is assigned to V. (A) Because of this new condition, N must be assigned to either V or X, and neither of them speaks r. (B) No, at most one of these two can be assigned to V, since the other two must be assigned to X, and X doesn’t speak f. (C) Don’t forget condition 3. If K is assigned to X, then M must speak f. For X to have two assignments then, N must speak s or t. (D) Don’t forget condition 3. If K is assigned to X, then M must speak f. (E) * Yes, if K is assigned to X, then M must speak f.

12. H & I can only speak f or t. Option 1 - If f is the language, then M & N are assigned to V, K to X, and condition 3 is met. Option 2 – If t is the language, then M & N are assigned to X, K to V, and condition 3 is met. (A) No, K’s only options are s, f, or t. (B) No, Z only can have one tourist in this question. (C) No, if M & N speak f, at most two can. If M & N speak t, then only one can speak s. (D) No, it is either zero, one, or four. (E) * Yes, if M & N speak t, K would have to speak f.
Overview of puzzle set #3 - Sports Teams

Six people (K/L/M/N/O/P/S) play either golf or tennis, but not both. They are then ranked by skill from highest to lowest. As this will require multiple diagrams, we’ll come back to them later. Turning to the conditions:

Condition 1: O = T
Condition 2: L = G
Condition 3: L = best golfer
Condition 4: If M = G, then M > P > S
Condition 5: If M = T, then O > S > M
Condition 6: If P = T, then K > O > P

Okay, looking at the conditions, there only are two fixed players, O & L. Notice that the ranking order given is part of a condition, so in that absence of that condition, the rank is not set. Make some extra conclusions. M and S are always together, see conditions 4 & 5 to see why. None of the players is a true free-floater, all 6 have some restriction that can effect them. Note that some of the relationships can’t be read in reverse. For example, condition 6 does not say that if K = T, then P = T. See condition 4.

Besides the ranking orders above, a heavier-than diagram will be helpful with the bookkeeping. It contains the finished products. (Figure 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tennis - O</th>
<th>Golf - L</th>
<th>L&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1

13. There is no new information provided, so this is simply a condition violator answer elimination question. (A) This violates condition 5. (B) Sorry, but if P = T, then so must K. (C) * Correct, this does not violate any of the conditions. (D) No, condition 6 is triggered when P plays tennis. Thus, O is ranked higher than P. (E) Condition 5 places S higher than M.

14. Conditions 5 & 6 relate specifically to tennis ranking. O must play tennis, and according to the conditions, everyone can be lower ranked than O, except K which is higher than O. However, because K can play without P this order is not a “must”. (A) * Remember how S & M must play the same sport? S can only play tennis if M plays tennis, thus condition 5 must apply. As such, S can never be the lowest-ranking tennis player, M is lower than S. (B) K is only highest if P plays. Without P, K can be ranked last. (C) Don’t forget that O is the only one who must play tennis. If O plays by himself, he is the lowest-ranked player. (D) If condition 6, but not 5, applies, then P is the lowest ranked player. (E) If condition 5, but not condition 6, applies, then M must be the lowest-ranked.

15. Ranking, from highest to lowest, for tennis must comply with conditions 5 and 6. (A) Sorry, but S must be paired with M, and this choice doesn’t include M. (B) This has correct potential players, but condition 6 sets the ranking to be K > O > P. (C) This has correct potential players, but condition 5 says that the ranking is O > S > M. (D) * Yes, K can play tennis without P. In that case, there are no limitations as to the ranking of K. As to the other players, the ranking set by condition 5 is met. (E) Sorry, but O must play tennis, per condition 1. Shame on you if you chose this answer!

16. Where S goes, so must go M. If M plays golf, then P must also play. Thus far we have (L/M/P/S) all playing golf. O must play tennis. Since P is not playing tennis, K is free to play either sport. (A) & (B) Per condition 3, they both play golf together. (C) * K is free to play either golf or tennis, so this is a possible, but not a must relationship. (D) Conditions 2 and 3 combine to require that they play together in this case. (E) M & S always are together!
17. For O to be the highest-ranking player, then by reverse reasoning, condition 6 is not applicable. Thus P must be playing golf. (A) No, O can be highest if M plays golf. Remember, O can play by himself. (B) * Yes! P must play golf in this case, and L must always play golf. (C) Sorry, but this must be FALSE otherwise, O cannot be highest-ranked. (D) If P plays golf, K is free to play either golf or tennis. (E) Again, P must play golf, so K can play either sport.

18. A new condition determines that S & P do not play the same sport as each other. Thus, condition 4 is affected, and M must play tennis. Since M must play tennis, then S must play tennis. P may play golf without S. If P plays golf, K is free to play either sport. (A) As K is free to play either sport, this could be true. (B) Again, K is free to play either tennis or golf. (C) * Correct. M must be coupled with S, thus if M & P are together, the new condition will be violated. (D) & (E) K’s freedom allows these both to be true.
Overview of puzzle set #4- Disc Jockey

She will play seven songs in a row from two groups: ballads (F/G/H) and dance (R/S/V/X).

Obviously a simple line diagram should suffice! (Figure 1)

```
  d   d   d   d   d   d   d
Fig. 1
```

Condition 1: No dance immediately next to a dance.
Condition 2: H < V
Condition 3: V ___ S or S ___ V
Condition 4: SF or FS
Condition 5: RF, unless G<R

Let’s consider the conditions. There are four dance songs and only seven spaces. Condition 1 says that dance songs cannot be next to each other. What does that mean? Think hard. Condition 1 dictates that the dance songs will be on odd-numbered spaces. Conditions 2 and 3 can be combined into four options: either H<V ___ S, HV __ S, H<S ___ V, or SHV. Condition 4 modifies these conditions by placing F immediately before or after S. Realize that if V is before S, condition 5 will be violated unless G is before R. Why? If R is before F, then V & S cannot be one space apart and still allow F to be immediately before or after S. This is a fair amount of analysis. Don’t worry, you didn’t have to see all these connections to correctly answer the questions, but it helps.

19. No new information means that you should eliminate choices that violate the given conditions. (A) F is not immediately before/after S, and so this violates condition 1. (B) R is before G, but F does not immediately follow R, condition 5. (C) V and S cannot be separated by this many spaces. (D) H is after V, and this violates condition 2. (E) * Correct, this does not violate any of the conditions.

20. Must be true... (A) is not correct. Stop and think for a second, which song is our free agent, with no limitations? X has no conditions that directly effect it. So unless the conditions had set all the other spots, which they never will, X never has a 'must' position. (B) Looking at the correct answer in question 19, S wasn’t first. So obviously this is not a “must” relationship. Besides, think about our starting analysis. There was nothing to suggest that V could not come before S. (C) Sorry, but a ballad must immediately follow or proceed a dance song per condition 1. (D) * Yes, condition 1 requires that the song types alternate, otherwise a dance song would be next to a dance song. (E) This is the exact same analysis as (C) and is wrong for the same reason.

21. Well, we know that even-numbered songs can only be ballads (F/G/H). Looking at the answer choices, there is only one ballad to choose from. (Which is good, as we haven’t set an order requirement for the ballads yet.) Thus, (A) * is the correct answer. (B) - (E), being all dance songs, are incorrect.

22. Like, question 21, the odd-numbered spaces must be dance songs (R/S/V/X). This leaves us (R/S/V) to worry about. V cannot be first as H must come before V. If S is first, F must immediately follow, but then H is not before V. Thus only R remains as a choice! (A) * Correct, either R (or X) can come first. (B) This violates either condition 2 or condition 3. (C) This puts H after V in violation of condition 2. (D) & (E) These are ballads, which must be placed on even number spaces to fulfill condition 1.

23. With this new information we can create a new diagram. Since S is in the third position, V cannot be first (because of H), so V must be fifth. We already know that the sixth position must be a ballad (F/G/H). Since H must be before V and since F must be next to S, only G is left to fill this position. (Figure 2)
(A) * Correct! This is the only ballad that can fill this position. (B) H must come before V. (C) -
(E) Dances can only be the odd numbered positions.

24. If the last song is R this forces X to the first position. (See question 22 if you are unsure why, the
analysis is almost the same.) This leaves S/V for the third and fifth positions. (A) - (C) Ballads cannot be
in odd numbered positions, thus (F/G/H) are ruled out. (D) * Yes, this is one of the two possibilities! (E)
Sorry, but X must be first, if R is last. Otherwise either condition 2 or 4 is violated. Or you could have
looked at the correct answer for question 19 and seen that V was in the fifth position.
Analysis of the Questions:

1. Taxpayer- This is a straightforward make a conclusion question. Here, the taxpayer says that Metro City should have spent more on bridge maintenance rather than trying to economize. Now they face a big bill to reconstruct the bridges. Do not get hung up on the numbers given. Focus on the basics of the argument.

(A) * This is pretty obviously what the taxpayer is leading to with his argument. Make sure to go through the other answer choices to determine if there is a better match. (B) This is the opposite of the taxpayer’s argument. The taxpayer is saying that the city should have spent more on bridge maintenance and would then have to spend LESS on bridge reconstruction rather than MORE on reconstruction. This is an answer choice that you can immediately eliminate. (C) This again is the opposite of the taxpayer’s conclusion and argument. This is another answer that you can immediately eliminate. (D) Although this may be true, this is not what the taxpayer is arguing towards and there is no indication that the city was actually saving money for the emergency bridge reconstruction. This is an immaterial answer, which can be easily eliminated. (E) This is a “random distracter” that the LSAT is so fond of using. You can quickly eliminate random distracter answers. There is nothing in the passage about the cost of initially building the bridges. Do not let this distract you. So (A) * is the correct answer as we immediately suspected.

When going through the other answer choices to make sure that there is not a better choice than (A), make sure not to spend too much time analyzing answer choices that can be immediately and easily eliminated. Here we had one correct answer, two false answers, one immaterial answer, and one random distracter answer. This is pretty standard for the LSAT. Usually 2 or 3 answers should be easy to eliminate. Keep this in mind, immediately eliminate these answer choices and move on. Don’t waste time on these answer choices! They are included on the LSAT to try to get you to waste time and a key to time management is to not spend time on these answer choices. You will spend most of your time weighing the remaining answer choices.

2. ! Twenty professional- This is a very straightforward make a conclusion question. Take all the facts in the passage and make a solid conclusion. The question stem does not always use this exact wording. Since you read the question first you know that you are going to have to make a conclusion from the facts given. Make a preliminary conclusion and then check the answer choices to see in any matches the conclusion that you made. Although it may seem that it is a waste of time to identify the conclusion before reading the answer choices, it will actually save time and allow you to more easily eliminate answer choices.

What is a possible conclusion based on these facts? The facts indicate that even if a tax return has been prepared by a professional income-tax advisor, it may not be technically correct. Here we had one correct answer, two false answers, one immaterial answer, and one random distracter answer. This is pretty standard for the LSAT. Usually 2 or 3 answers should be easy to eliminate. Keep this in mind, immediately eliminate these answer choices and move on. Don’t waste time on these answer choices! They are included on the LSAT to try to get you to waste time and a key to time management is to not spend time on these answer choices. You will spend most of your time weighing the remaining answer choices.

What is a possible conclusion based on these facts? The facts indicate that even if a tax return has been prepared by a professional income-tax advisor, it may not be technically correct. Go through the answer choices and determine which most closely matches the conclusion you made. (A) Although this is what happened in this situation, there is no certainty that it will always be 1 in 20. (B) * This very closely matches what we came up with. Simply because a tax return was prepared by a professional income-tax advisor does not mean that it will be correct. It seems like this is the correct answer. Quickly check the other answer choices to make sure there is not an even better statement of the conclusion. (C) This is the opposite of the proper conclusion. Immediately eliminate this answer. (D) This is not the conclusion. We can’t conclude, based on these facts, that all preparers make mistakes on some returns. This is an overbroad conclusion that goes too far beyond our facts. (E) We are never given facts about individuals, so we can’t properly conclude anything about them.

3. The manager- This is a strengthening/weakening question. This is, of course, a fairly common question type. Here we are asked to weaken the argument, calling into question the manager’s claim. Don’t let the wording stump you just because it does not specifically ask you to weaken the argument. Calling into question a claim made in the argument passage is the same as weakening the argument in the passage.

Do you remember the weakening trick? Read “But this conclusion is false because…” and insert your choice. Also, as you read this passage, your “LSAT eye” may have noticed the comparison was from
nuclear plants to all plants. This may be relevant. (A) This seems as though it may be a possible answer choice. But, if you really think about the answer choice, additional training would make the employees safer, supporting the claim. That the additional training is on the employee’s own time and expense is irrelevant. (B) This again would support the argument by the manager of the plant. It is showing that all accidents are actually reported. (C) This is simply an irrelevant answer choice and can be immediately eliminated. (D) The number of lawsuits filed regarding unsafe working conditions would again bolster the argument of the manager and this answer choice can be eliminated. (E) * This answer is correct. If the medical problems are not known until after the employee left the plant, this would demonstrate that the injury rate quoted by the manager understates the true dangers. This would undermine the conclusion that the plant is safer. When analyzing these types of questions, do not forget that you are trying to weaken the argument, not strengthen it. This is a common mistake, so keep focused. Try the technique discussed above. It works well with (E), doesn’t it?

4. Columnist- This is a flawed reasoning question. We are asked to identify why the columnist’s argument is flawed. Here we should next read the columnist’s argument and try to identify what is the flaw before going to the answer choices.

Here, the columnist argues that since the new legislation is supported by bad people the legislation must be defeated. What is the flaw with this reasoning? The columnist is not focusing on the merit or need for the legislation, rather on the supporters of the legislation. It should be obvious to you that this is an ad hominem attack. (A) This is close. But on second consideration, you see that the columnist does not question the integrity of the originators of the legislation. In fact, the originators of the legislation were never mentioned. Move on. This is an example of why it is good to review all the answer choices, to make sure you did not overlook anything. (B) * This is correct. This is what we identified before looking at the answer choices. Make a quick check of the remaining answers. (C) This again is a false answer. The columnist does not address anyone who is adversely affected. (D) Again, this statement is a false answer and irrelevant to the argument made by the columnist. Nowhere in the columnist’s argument does he mention the number of supporters for the legislation. (E) Again, this is incorrect because the argument does not mention anyone acting inconsistently.

5. If the ivory trade- Add a new principle (which is like a fact) to strengthen Zimbabwe’s argument. Will this question be one of the ten sacrifice questions that you can lose before your LSAT score is noticeably hurt? If so, try to eliminate the likely wrong answers, mark your guess, and if time allows, come back to the question when you finish the section.

The easiest way to approach this question, as is the case with most questions, is to eliminate the wrong answers, narrowing your options to two or three. So what can you eliminate here without spending too much time thinking? (A) * This would support Zimbabwe. The passage says that Zimbabwe has not caused the problem and should therefore not be adversely affected by the proposed measures used to correct the problem. Check the remaining answer choices to make sure that this is correct. (B) This is not correct and seems to be the opposite of the argument statements given. (C) Zimbabwe doesn’t appeal to sovereignty. (D) This seems to be a plausible answer choice, but answer (A) is a better choice. (E) This seems somewhat helpful to Zimbabwe’s argument, but on second glance, Zimbabwe doesn’t feel poaching is the problem. Do not include your opinions. This is what this answer choice is doing, so this is incorrect. Therefore * (A) is correct.

6. The male sage grouse- This time we are asked to strengthen the argument. This is slightly easier than the weakening the argument questions for most LSAT takers because this is the way that most people think. Remember the technique. “And this is true because…”

The scientists conclude that female sage grouse select mates based on the air sacs they see. (A) This actually undermines the hypothesis of the scientists. You can easily eliminate this answer choice since we are trying to strengthen the hypothesis. (B) This is incorrect and does not actually bolster the argument. If the birds were treated, they would be healthy. (C) This is actually contrary to the scientists’ hypothesis, and would weaken the argument not strengthen it. (D) * This would strongly support the hypothesis. By puffing the air sacs during mating, the female would be able to easily identify those birds that are unhealthy
and not mate with them. (E) This is a “so what?” answer choice. Therefore, the correct answer choice is (D) *.

7. Consumers- This is an assumption question. What assumption does the speaker make in order to make this conclusion?

Read the passage and identify the conclusion. The conclusion is that reducing the supply of halibut will increase the price of the halibut. (A) * Explicitly referencing the law of supply and demand, this is an assumption that is vital to conclude that prices will increase. This seems to be the correct answer, but let’s examine the other answer choices to verify that this is correct. (B) This seems like an assumption, but it is more vague than (A). (C) This addresses outside information, which is a no-no for assumption questions. (D) This is not addressed or assumed within the passage. (E) This is also irrelevant to the argument passage and can be eliminated. Therefore (A) * is the correct answer choice.

8. Knowledge of an ancient- This is a vulnerable to criticism question. This requires a careful reading of the argument. Remember, you are looking for an inherent flaw, so your answer choice will not add a new fact to weaken the conclusion, as is the case in weakening questions. Questions like this are prime examples of why it is important to read the question first. It makes the analysis much easier!

The facts are that since most ancient documents are translated into modern languages, it is not necessary for ancient-history scholars to learn ancient languages. (A) * This may be possible. The argument does assume that it is never necessary to learn ancient languages since it is not always necessary to know them. This seems to be correct, but let’s check the other answer choices. (B) This is simply incorrect. No facts were stated as opinions. (C) The conclusion does not merely restate the evidence, it is actually a new conclusion. This kind of answer choice is easily eliminated. (D) Judgment of experts really does not have anything to do with the argument and is incorrect. (E) This is a possibility. Compare (A) and (E). (A) * The passage does conclude that learning is never necessary since most documents are translated. (E) This one still looks good. The reason it is wrong is because we would have to assume something extra in order to make this correct. We would have to assume that reading original documents is necessary in order to be a scholar. Although in seems natural to assume this, there is no direct support for this. Thus, the two pieces of evidence, in line one and line two, are not contradictory.

9. Board of Trustees- This is a two-question passage. We saw two of these in the first section. This first question is another assumption question. This is the second time we have seen this question type in this section. We saw this question type six times on the first Logical Reasoning section on this LSAT. Now do you believe how important this question type is? Make sure to understand how to do these questions and you will definitely do better on the LSAT.

Now, let’s first identify the facts and conclusion so that we can more easily identify an assumption of the argument. Find the “jump” in the argument. The author concludes that selling the works will not detract from the quality of the museum’s conclusion. No obvious jump, so go to the answers. (A) Speculators really are off the subject. Eliminate this answer choice. (B) * This is definitely an assumption that the passage relies on. By only selling the works recommended by the curator, the sales will not detract from the quality of the museum’s collection. You probably assumed that they were going to be the same paintings. Check the other answer choices so we can confirm that this is the best answer. (C) This is irrelevant information, and is unnecessary for this conclusion. (D) The amount willing to be paid for the works is irrelevant to the argument passage. (E) This might strengthen the argument, but it is not an assumption.

10. Board of Trustees- Here we are asked to weaken the argument. Remember the conclusion; selling the works will not detract from the quality of the museum’s collection. What new facts will undercut this conclusion? (A) Although this criticizes them for not trying harder, it doesn’t weaken the conclusion regarding the quality of the collection. This is irrelevant to the argument and can be quickly eliminated. (B) * This new information greatly undermines the conclusion. If quality equals having a wide range of works, including early works, then selling the early works would hurt the quality. Let’s check the
remaining choices. (C) So what? The works still are unimportant. Move on. (D) “Inflation?” “Speculators?” This is silly. (E) Obviously, the amount that the painting would generate at its sale does not weaken the conclusion as to quality.

11. Taken together- This is a variation of a weakening question. Four of the answers will weaken the conclusion, and one will not. Therefore, you must read through all of the answer choices and identify which answer choice either strengthens the conclusion, or is irrelevant to the conclusion.

What are the facts? The recommended stocks did worse than overall market over 12 years. What is the conclusion? That no one should follow the recommendations of these experts. (A) This would weaken the argument. Maybe these experts only recommended stocks to hold for a few months, and are not recommending stocks to hold for many years. (B) It would somewhat weaken the conclusion if these experts are at least better than other experts. (C) This weakens the argument by undermining the comparison. (D) * This does not weaken the argument. This new fact actually strengthens the conclusion. (E) Although individual stock picks didn’t fare well, this new fact indicated that the consultants are getting something right.

12. The school principal- This is a parallel reasoning question. These questions are best skipped, especially if you are running short on time. Even if you can usually answer them correctly, they require more than the 84 seconds you can devote to them.

Remember that we are not correcting the argument, we only want to find the argument that has the most similar structure. First, since there is a flaw in this argument, then we must find an answer with a similar flaw. Second, sometimes, but not this time, you can eliminate choices that use the same subject as the passage. Third, what is the flaw? An obvious one is that the teachers decided to stop flunking students, since the principal will accuse them of being bad teachers. So, overlooking the fear of recriminations is the flaw that we want to be on the lookout for. Fourth, graph the pattern. A (bad teaching) = (results in) B (failures). Since no B (no more failures) = (therefore, must be) no A (no bad teaching). Put more simply, A = B, since no B = no A. The correct answer will have two elements with this back and forth structure.

(A) This one has two elements, so far so good. But it is a logical conclusion and has the wrong pattern. A (overeating) = (causes) B (gain). Since no A = no B.

(B) This is not even close, it has three elements, and does not go back and forth. If A (tasks) = B (complain). Since no A and since no B = C (improved).

(C) This doesn’t even have an A/B structure.

(D) * Correct. First, it has a similar flaw. The principal blamed the failures on the teachers and all of a sudden the failing grades disappeared. Here the manager says that if workers complain it means they don’t have enough work. Miraculously, complaints stop. Now look at the structure. If A (nothing to do) = B (complain). Since no B = no A.

(E) Initially this was interesting. But it graphs like this: A (too often) = B (gain). Since no A = no B. But we wanted A/B, no B/no A.

13. Unlike other primroses- This is a resolve the discrepancy question. You want to be a mediator in this question type. When you first read the passage, it seems contradictory. Why would self-pollinating primroses be rare among primroses? After all, they have higher average seed production. Thinking aloud, maybe they only grow in certain areas, but this idea runs afoot of the given fact that they are the same, except for seed production. Let’s look to the answer choices for an assumption that would explain this apparent contradiction. (A) This does not seem to help explain the contradiction. It seems to have a neutral effect. (B) * This does not seem to help explain the contradiction. It seems to have a neutral effect. (C) This deepens the paradox. (D) This does not explain the discrepancy since this would put both types of primroses on an equal footing. (E) This is a contradiction of a fact, or it may be a restated fact. It is unclear what it is. Therefore (B) * is the correct answer choice. You may have steered clear of (B) since it said the seeds were larger. But the last fact in the passage allows for differences in seed production.
14. A moral obligation - This is an unusual phrasing for an argument structure question. Read the passage and identify the flow of the argument. It concludes that we are morally obligated to preserve things that will contribute to intellectual and emotional enrichment of future generations. Examine the answer choices now. (A) This is a tempting answer, but it is somewhat wishy-washy. Hold onto this one for the moment. (B) There is nothing mentioned of past generations. Remember we are simply identifying the argument as stated, and should not insert additional facts. (C) This is a false answer. There is nothing mentioned in the argument regarding a comparison of moral commitments. (D) * This essentially restates the argument and is probably the correct answer. First make sure that (A) is not a better match. (A) This choice fails because it discusses “effort” and “performing actions” (both acts of commission) instead of “not destroying” (an act of omission) and it says “some chance” instead of “almost certainly.” Therefore the correct answer is (D) *.

15. The southern half - This is a make a conclusion question. From the facts, look at each answer choice to identify the four that are a possible conclusion. This can be a bit of a time waster. You have to individually analyze each choice to determine if it is a conclusion that is not supported by the facts. This is a tough one. Let’s understand the facts first. In region X, the south half is water for 75 million years. The north half is not. Dinos live on land. Plesios are not dinos. (A) This statement could be true from the facts given in the passage. We know dinos live on land and we know region X had land in the north half. (B) Tempting, but this could be true. No facts ever actually said that plesios lived in region X. (C) This could be true, or false, we don’t know what happened “before.” (D) This is the same logic as (A); maybe they did not live in X. (E) * This is not true and cannot be true based on the facts. This is actually contradicted in the passage. Dinos don’t do water.

16. Essayist - This is another make a conclusion question, and is almost identical to problem 15. This is a tough one. (A) This is tempting. (B) This is also tempting. (C) This could be true based on the essayist’s comments in the last sentence. (D) * This is tempting too. It’s unusual to have three tempting answers. (E) This could be true based on the statements. We don’t know exact quantities, but we don’t need to. (A) & (B) The reason these could be true is that the essayist only discusses people he has met personally, so they essayist is not making a statement about “most people.” Very sly stuff, indeed. (D) The author has met at least one person who has one quality, so (D) contradicts the speaker. There, I promised it would be a tough one.

17. Concerned citizen - A flaw in the reasoning question. We know that we are trying to find the flaw in the argument and that we should read the passage looking for one of the common types of flaws.

(A) This argument does use an emotional appeal and this is a possible answer choice. Let’s mark this as a possibility and check the other answer choices. (B) * The argument does use "afford" from both a cost perspective and a morale perspective; mark it. (C) This is off target and incorrect; he disagrees with the mayor. (D) This is off base. Both of them agree that it would be expensive. (E) The argument does use those words, and this seems like it could be a possible answer choice, but an emotional appeal can be a valid argument technique. (A) An emotional appeal is a valid argument technique, as (E) helped us see. (B) * There is a semantic shift flaw. Using the same word for different meanings is the flaw we see in the last sentence.

18. Obviously - Another assumption question. It is crucial to be able to successfully answer this question type. We must identify the conclusion and where the author of the passage makes a jump in coming to that conclusion.

Let’s first identify the conclusion made by the author. The conclusion here is that plants cannot be mistreated. The facts used to support this are that plants can’t feel pain. The author seems to assume, making the logical jump, that feeling pain is a requirement for being mistreated. (A) This seems to be a possible answer choice. Let’s mark this as a possibility and check the other answer choices. (B) This is incorrect, this statement is directly given in the argument and we need to identify where the jump is made, not a fact stated in the argument. (C) This again is incorrect because the facts do not say that any organism
with a nervous system can experience pain, rather than a nervous system is necessary to experience pain. Be careful not to invert that type of conclusion. (D) * The passage certainly depends on this answer. Now let’s compare this with answer choice (A) to determine which is the better answer. (A) uses the word “any” while (D) uses “only.” The passage is better supported by “only,” and (D) * is the correct answer choice because it is narrower. (E) This statement is too broad for the argument given and is incorrect.

19. Inez- This is an argument structure question. Here we are asked to identify how Anika proceeds with her argument. In other words, we are asked to identify how, not what, Anika is arguing. Try to see the big picture. Anika says it will be unneeded or redundant, and would make them more expensive. (A) * Anika does state how the plan would have a contrary effect, scaring buyers with higher prices. Let’s evaluate the other answer choices to check that this is the correct answer. (B) This is incorrect. Yes, Anika names at least one undesirable consequence, but does not concede that the plan would be effective. (C) This also is incorrect. Anika does not give any alternative plan. (D) Again, there is no questioning the assumption that authorities are available. Move on and evaluate the last answer choice. (E) Anika does not offer a counterexample and this is therefore an incorrect answer. Therefore, we know that (A) * is the correct answer choice.

20. In some ill-considered- A parallel reasoning question. To restate an earlier discussion, these questions are huge time wasters. Typically we see two of these per section. You don’t want to let them slow you down and hurt the rest of the section. Strongly consider skipping these questions and going back to them at the end. Even if you do not get back to them, they can be one of the questions that you can miss without noticeably affecting your score. Since there is no flaw, and no answer choices deal with a similar subject, go to the diagramming step.

First diagram the original argument. A (apes have skills) but never B (used skills). This is like claiming C (animals have wings) but never D (flew).

(A) Arguing A (humans who never sleep) is like discovering B (species of lion) who does not C (eat meat). This does not match the pattern at all.

(B) Arguing A (earth visited by aliens) is like claiming B (early explorers) never C (founded cities). This also does not match the reasoning pattern of the argument.

(C) * Arguing A (brain has telekinetic powers) but never B (used telepathy). This is like arguing that C (insect has legs) but never D (walked). This does match the pattern of the original argument and is therefore the correct answer.

(D) Arguing A (that people raised tobacco) but B (did not smoke it) is like claiming that C (society that knew how to brew alcohol) never D (drank the alcohol). This is close, but id doesn’t focus on the mental skill/physical skill. It focuses on use of/use of.

(E) Arguing A (not all people with cars will drive them) is like claiming B (humans invented gasoline) before using C (gasoline) for D (transportation). Not even close. This, like all parallel reasoning questions, was very time consuming and difficult. But, carefully looking at the patterns we can see that (C) * is the correct answer choice.

21. Sarah: Some schools- Do not let two-question passages bother you. This is an A responds to B question. What is the argumentative technique used by Paul to disagree with Sarah? Keep this in mind as you read through the conversation between Sarah and Paul.

What is Paul arguing? He says that forcing students to perform community service is not necessarily negative because some enjoy their community service and then later volunteer. (A) He is not arguing that Sarah is assuming what she sets out to prove. This type of choice is normally incorrect. (B) Again, he does not say she excludes any activities. (C) * This is possible. He is questioning the assumption that students who are forced to work once do not enjoy their experience and later volunteer. (D) Paul makes no mention of Sarah’s motive. (E) Paul does not mention any other policy. This is also incorrect. Therefore (C) * is the correct answer choice.

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22. Sarah: Some schools- This is a point at issue question, which account for fewer than 3% of all logical reasoning questions. The second person will always disagree. So what do they disagree about? Simply put, can volunteering be fostered by requiring community service? (A) Neither of them says that requiring community service equals genuine volunteering. (B) Although Paul mentions that some of the students forced to perform community service do enjoy it, Sarah doesn’t, and so this is not the focus of their disagreement. (C) * This is what Sarah and Paul are disagreeing about. She says no, and he says yes. (D) This is a possibility. But it fails because Sarah doesn’t say that no policy can foster the habit. She says the required community service will not foster it. This leaves open the possibility that other policies may work. A very fine distinction certainly, but hey, this isn’t the SAT! (E) This is not stated by Paul, although it seems like it could be. It is taking Paul’s argument one step further which is something that you want to avoid in these types of questions and a common trap set for you by the LSAT test writers.

23. Only computer scientists- This is a flaw in the reasoning question. These can be difficult. Let’s go through the answer choices and determine which is the flaw in the argument. Remember, the flaw is already there, we just need to see it. What do you want to bet that it is one of the four common flaws? (A) This is factually false. The argument does state a relationship between computer scientists and those who appreciate the advances in technology over the past decade – they are the same! This is an incorrect answer choice. (B) * Mark it as a possibility and check the other choices. (C) This is irrelevant to the argument and is certainly not a flaw in the argument. (D) This also is not true, a logical conclusion can be drawn, and is. (E) Again, this is untrue. The argument explicitly states that only computer scientists understand the architecture of personal computers. Therefore, (B) * is the correct answer, more by default then by its own strength. Why is (B) * correct? Try using simple terms. Only apples are red fruit. Only red fruit are tasty things. Therefore, only tasty things are apples. But just because apples are the only red fruit, this doesn’t mean that apples must be red. They can be any color. Red fruit must be apples, not vice versa. See the discussion on necessary and sufficient pre-conditions if you have trouble with this concept.

24. Sociologist:- A weakening the argument question. Let’s find a new fact that will weaken or detract from this conclusion. First, our facts tell us that most pet owners are less happy than non-owners. (Assumption: that owning a pet makes one less happy then one would otherwise be.) Therefore, to be happy, avoid pet ownership. (A) This is a bit too imprecise but it may weaken the conclusion. There might be another answer that weakens it more. Mark it as a possibility. (B) This is really an irrelevant statement and incorrect. (C) This may be a true statement but really does not weaken the argument and is therefore incorrect. The word “reasonably” makes this too wishy-washy. (D) * This would really weaken the conclusion and is an even better choice than (A). This is probably the correct answer, but make sure to check (E) first. (E) Being unhappy sometimes does not weaken the conclusion. Therefore, (D) * is the correct answer since it attacks the validity of the assumption. As always, you can eliminate your way to the correct answer.

25. The dwarf masked owl- Another assumption question. The facts are: a blight destroyed all of the spiny cacti on the Baja peninsula, and no other nesting sites in Baja. Therefore, the owl will not winter in Baja. Now go through the answer choices and determine which is the assumption, there has to be one, on which this conclusion is based. (A) Other birds are irrelevant to whether or not the owl will nest on the Baja peninsula. (B) This seems like it could be an assumption, but in actuality it is simply restating the original conclusion. Do not let this fool you. (C) This is a red herring. Although it seems like it could be an assumption, it really has no bearing on the fact that the spiny cacti on the Baja peninsula were destroyed, and therefore no real bearing on the argument. (D) This again is a tricky answer but is probably not correct. If you eliminate the double negative, you find it is simply restating the original conclusion. (E) * This is correct. By assuming that suitable nesting sites must exist before the owl will nest, you can correctly conclude that the destruction of the spiny cacti (nesting place of the owl) means that the owl will not have a suitable place to nest and therefore will not nest on the Baja Peninsula. Still unsure? Try inserting the text of (E) into the facts. It definitely makes sense.
26. At night- A make a conclusion question. You made it! After 51 Logical Reasoning questions, your brain is probably fried. Focus and finish. This question is a variation of the make a conclusion question. Here we are being asked which of the answer choices “can be rejected on the basis of the statements.” In other words, which of the answer choices is not a logical conclusion from the facts. Do not get confused and pick the best answer, here you want the worst answer. This trips up many LSAT takers. Don’t let it trip you up!

Preliminarily summarize the passage facts. Crows roost in flocks and typically keep the same roost location for several years, and hunt up to 60-80 miles from the roost. When they do abandon their roost, they typically find a new roost within 5 miles. Now let’s examine the answer choices to determine which one does NOT logically follow from these statements. (A) This sounds like it is possible based on the facts. Since this is a possible conclusion, it is not a correct answer. (B) This is a new fact that is not relevant. (C) Although we don’t know exact numbers, this is at least a possible conclusion, so we can’t reject it based on the facts. This again follows from the passage and can be eliminated as an answer choice. (D) This is the most logical and direct conclusion; they don’t leave easily. Therefore this is also an incorrect answer. (E) * This answer choice does not follow from the statements given. If they ate all the food in the area of the roost, they would want to set-up a new roost in an area that was not depleted. Try drawing a circle to show 80 miles and then move the center point 5 miles and draw a new circle showing 80 miles. See, the two circles mostly overlap.