

800SCORE AWA

Chapter 1: Guide to the E-rater and the AWA

Introduction

The Analytical Writing Assessment, more than any other element of GMAT preparation, has benefits that extend far beyond test day. The skills, reasoning tools, and techniques you learn for the AWA may be applied to any essay or persuasive writing. These skills will help you through business school and beyond.

The AWA can be beaten. The essay topics are available for you to review beforehand. The structures for the AWA answers are simple and may be learned.

Here are some tips before we get started:

- ★ Grammar and spelling is, by-and-large, less important than structure and content. Focus on structure and your argument formation.
- ★ The E-rater's main impact is to put more value on highly structured writing and the use of "key" words and phrases that the E-rater recognizes.
- ★ Take plenty of timed practice tests on a computer. Our sample essays on the site are designed for you to take practice essays and be evaluated.
- ★ Do not procrastinate AWA preparation. Students tend to put off the AWA until it is too late and then they cannot adequately prepare.

The new E-rater will grade your test along with a human grader. If they disagree, it will be sent to a third human grader. Thus, if you do not write your essay in the proper format for the E-rater it could lead to a lower score. Throughout the guidebook we have tips on the E-rater and a section exclusively about the E-rater.

The AWA consists of two 30-minute sections, the Analysis of Issue essay and the Analysis of Argument essay. You will receive a grade from 1 to 6, which will be sent with your GMAT scores.

The guide is divided into these sections:

Chapter 1: Introduction (this page)

Chapter 2: Analysis of Issue

Chapter 3: Analysis of Argument

Chapter 4: About the E-rater

Chapter 5: Improving Your Writing

Chapter 6: Getting the Real Essay Questions

Chapter 2: Analysis of Issue

In the Analysis of Issue question you discuss your opinion toward an issue. You write a well-balanced analysis of the issue the test presents to you.

These are the most common topics:

- ★ Government's role in ensuring the welfare of its citizens
- ★ Culture and social mores, attitudes, values
- ★ Management/organizational structure/behavior

- ★ Business: advertising and marketing
- ★ Business: labor and employment issue
- ★ Business-its overall role and objectives in society
- ★ Government's regulatory responsibilities.

Here is an example of an Analysis of Issue question:

Following the Colorado massacre of schoolchildren, many lawmakers have proposed that an international body regulate the internet so that sites which provide information to terrorists should be eliminated.

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the above opinion. Support your opinion with reasons and examples.

The people who grade the Analysis of Issue for the GMAT expect the following:

- i) A well-developed essay that is logical and coherent;
- ii) An essay that demonstrates critical thinking skills;
- iii) An essay which uses varied sentence structure and vocabulary;
- iv) An essay that uses the language of standard written English;
- v) An essay that is free of mechanical errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization; and
- vi) An essay that follows the conventions of standard written English.

Analysis of Issue: Content

How do I write a well-balanced essay?

You should always acknowledge both sides of an issue. Among the sample essays there is not one irrefutable essay, yet you must pick a side. The trick to doing this is to persuade the reader that, despite the counter-arguments, your position is the strongest one overall.

Try to "straddle the fence" between both sides of the issue by making limited use of qualifiers. This will allow you to acknowledge the opposing view and appear scholarly. (Note that overuse of qualifiers will make the essay appear too vague and dilute an argument you are making.)

In general, take a politically correct opinion or an opinion that a majority of top scorers might take. However, if you do not think you can write an effective politically-correct essay, adjust your content to fit what you can comfortably express. In general, though, stay uncontroversial and balanced. Do not use it as a forum to be an ideologue. Writing a highly charged essay might evoke a bias from the reader (if he disagrees with you) and it also may confuse the E-rater, since your essay will not resemble any essays it has stored in its database. Try to approach each issue in a dispassionate and balanced manner.

Nevertheless, you must be sure to take a stand. You must pick a side that will "win out" in the conclusion/introduction. The test instructions specifically tell you to pick a side. Make sure to disagree or agree with the question's statement.

How in-depth should the essays be?

Your essay is short (you have only 30 minutes), so you won't be able to cover every possible argument, rebuttal and example. When you start the test set aside a few minutes to set up the points and examples. You do not have to cover every idea/concept. Most GMAT students do not have time to cover everything they would like to cover. Choose the most persuasive relevant points and examples to use. The GMAT graders do not expect you to go in-depth on every topic.

The most important concern here is that you do not go off of the main subject. Stay focused on the topic. Do not either go off on tangential arguments or excessively focus on one example.

Where should I get examples?

The instructions (with only a few exceptions) allow you to draw upon your personal experiences in developing your answer to each essay question. This practice is acceptable, but don't overdo it. You should generally rely more on academic knowledge than personal experiences.

Your examples and knowledge can be impressive, but you shouldn't go too far. Don't try to impress the grader with your expertise in a narrow area. The AWA tests analytical writing, not specific subject knowledge.

Where do I get essay issue ideas?

The topics in the Analysis of Issue section are commonly addressed in policy-oriented magazines.

- ◆ Wall Street Journal editorial page
- ◆ Forbes
- ◆ The Economist
- ◆ The New Republic
- ◆ Slate

International Students: Read these American magazines as much as possible to see how Americans structure their writing and to stay updated on issues.

Write with your grader in mind

When you write your Issue essay, remember that you are fundamentally writing your essay to please your grader. ETS essay graders will typically be under-employed academics. The irony is that B-school candidates, with hopes of multiple 6-figure salary offers, come from an entirely different worldview. Don't ramble in a self-righteous manner. The graders will too easily dismiss you as another arrogant MBA candidate.

Keep it concise

Put yourself in the position of a grader. They grade essays all day. Wouldn't you favor a concise and effective essay with 5 paragraphs of 4 sentences each more than a 4 paragraph rambling essay with 10 sentences in each paragraph? The bottom line: keep the essays crisp, concise, and written in a manner appealing to the grader. This is particularly important on the Analysis of Issue question, where your essay expresses personal opinions.

Analysis of Issue: Structure

Structure is the most important part of your essay. Your essay must be written in a standard format with the standard logical transitions. The E-rater will scan your essay to identify if it has a standard structure.

◆ **Introduction/Conclusion-** These elements will provide the structure for your essay and keep you on track.

◆ **Number of Paragraphs.** To satisfy the E-rater, your essay should be 4 to 5 paragraphs: an introduction, a conclusion, and three "body" paragraphs. Each paragraph should have 2 to 5 sentences (total essay about 300-400 words).

Note: You should skip a line between paragraphs since the TAB key does not function in the essay section.

Essay Template

The template is just a guideline. You do not have to adhere to it. Often you will have to make changes to suit your argument.

▲ The numbers of sentences indicated for each paragraph is a guideline that varies depending on how much content you have.

▲ The transitional phrases we use in the Template are intentionally simplistic. This is not a simple approach where you can "fill-in-the-blanks." Flesh out the template somewhat and use it as a guideline to write a disciplined and focused essay.

Template

1) Introductory Paragraph (2-4 sentences)

Make sure to keep your introductory paragraph concise, strong and effective.

What the introductory paragraph should accomplish:

▲ Explain the issue (briefly).

▲ Show that you understand the full complexities of the issue (for example, by recognizing competing interests or various factors).

▲ State your position on the issue (without the details yet).

Sample template for introductory paragraph (2 sentences):

a) *Whether* _____ *depends on* _____.

b) *(Insert your opinion),* _____.

2) First Body Paragraph (3-5 sentences)

Begin to develop your position with your most important reason. Use one or two examples to back up your main point:

a) *The chief reason for my view is* _____.

b) *For example,* _____.

c) *Moreover,* _____.

d) *Finally,* _____.

3) Second Body Paragraph

Expand your position with a "secondary" reason. Support your rationale further with at least one example.

▲ State your second reason (one only).

▲ Provide rationale and/or evidence to support it.

Here's a sample template for the second body paragraph that accomplishes these objectives:

a) *Another reason for my view is* _____.

b) *Specifically,* _____.

c) *The result is,* _____.

4) Optional Third Body Paragraph

In this paragraph (optional) you acknowledge a competing viewpoint or counter-argument (and rationale and/or examples that support it), and then provide rebuttals to further support your position. In this paragraph you walk a tightrope, you must acknowledge the counter-argument, but yet deny it immediately in the next sentence and use that denial to strengthen your own argument.

▲ Acknowledge a different viewpoint or a counter-argument.

▲ Provide rationale and/or examples that support it.

▲ Provide a rebuttal.

Here's a sample template for the third body paragraph that accomplishes the objectives indicated above:

a) *Some might argue,* _____.

b) *Yet,* _____.

c) *Others might cite,* _____.

d) *However,* _____.

5) Conclusion Paragraph

In this paragraph you write a summary of your position in 1 to 3 sentences:

▲ State the thrust of your position.

▲ Restate the main points from the body of your essay.

The concluding paragraph is not the place for new information or reasons. It is not a place to draw new conclusions.

a) *In sum, I concur that* _____.

b) *However,* _____; *on the whole* _____.

Time Breakdown:

How to write a coherent 300 word essay in 30 minutes

1. Examine the issue (2-3 minutes)

- What is the basic issue? Try to phrase it as a question.
- Those in favor would say....
- Those against would say....

2. Choose what points you want to make (4-5 minutes)

- Arguments in favor:
- Arguments opposed:
- Take a side: which side do you prefer?
- What are the assumptions in the arguments?

Step 3: Outline (1 minute)

Use the templates on the prior page.

1. Make sure that your outline:

- states the central idea of the essay clearly and forcefully;
- provides a word or phrase for every paragraph in the essay;
- relates each paragraph to the central idea of the essay in (2a) above;
- includes an opening and closing paragraph which tie the essay together.

2. Build your paragraphs in the essay carefully. You may produce effective writing in the GMAT analytical writing section on the analysis of an issue by following a few simple rules:

a. Each paragraph should state a central idea which relates to the central idea of the entire essay.

b. Every statement in each paragraph should relate to the central idea of the paragraph in (3a) above. In each paragraph, use examples to support the central idea or explain it completely.

c. Consciously choose paragraph length, for if your paragraphs are all too short (one or two sentences), you will be penalized, and if they are too long you will also be penalized.

Step 4: Write/type your essay (20 minutes)

▲ What's your thesis sentence?

▲ Arguments for...

▲ Arguments opposed...

Step 5: Proofread your work (2 minutes)

Check for grammar, spelling, etc..

Chapter 3: Analysis of Argument

What is an Argument?

A strong argument attempts to persuade the reader to accept a point of view. As such, it consists of a proposition, a declarative statement which is capable of being argued, and a proof, a reason or ground which is supported by evidence. The evidence, in turn, is composed of relevant facts, opinions based on facts and careful reasoning. If you are analyzing an argument, you should look for both of these: a proposition and the evidence supporting the proposition.

In the same way that an analysis of issue essay must start with a thesis, so also an essay that analyzes an argument must start with a topic sentence which provides for the analysis of a proposition. Every argument should have a proposition, and the identification of this proposition is crucial to the writing of an analysis of an argument. For instance, the following could appear in the analytical writing section of the GMAT:

The two clauses beginning with since provide evidence in support of the proposition. In turn, the proposition itself is framed by the second sentence.

Since the world population will double to 11 billion people by the middle of the 21st century and since food production will not show a corresponding increase, efforts should be made to limit population growth. Governments must institute population control policies to insure an adequate food supply for future generations.

One aspect of argumentation that needs special attention is the use of terms. In an argument, all of the terms should be clear and well-defined. If the terms are unclear, proof is likely to be impossible, creating a weak argument. One type of weak term is the emotionally loaded term. Terms such as "socialized medicine" evoke emotional responses and, thus, obscure the argument. Thus, anyone who writes an analysis of an argument should examine the terms used and be sure that the writer avoids emotive, subjective terms. To the extent of your ability, make sure that the writer defines terms clearly and objectively.

In addition, the people who write and grade the analysis of an argument section for the GMAT expect the following:

- i) They want an essay that analyzes the several aspects of the argument with critical insight.
- ii) They want a cogently developed essay that is logical.
- iii) They want a coherent essay with well-chosen transitional devices.
- iv) They also expect an essay that uses varied sentence structure and vocabulary.
- v) They expect an essay that is free of mechanical errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar and errors in the use of standard written English.

As in the case of the analysis of the issue, the topic sentence must contain the germ of the idea that permeates the entire paragraph. Each example or illustration must be connected to that idea with transitional markers such as for example, furthermore, therefore, thus or moreover.

Dissect Arguments

ASSUMPTION HUNT: On Analysis of Issue questions you try to answer grand issues such as "Should China be in the WTO", or "Should parents have vouchers to send children to the school of their choice". The questions are different than Analysis of Argument, where you look for badly flawed reasoning. The difference between Analysis of Issue and Analysis of Argument is that reasonable people could differ on Analysis of Issue, but no reasonable person would absolutely support something in an Analysis of Argument question. When you are doing Analysis of Argument questions, look for reasoning fallacies.

The Stimulus

In the first part of the Analysis of Argument topic, the writer tries to persuade you of their conclusion by referring to evidence. When you read the "arguments" in these questions, be on the lookout for assumptions and poor logical reasoning used to make a conclusion.

The Question Stem

Question stems will ask you to decide how convincing you find the argument. You will be asked to explain why an argument is not convincing, and discuss what might improve the argument. For this task, you'll need to: first, analyze the argument itself and evaluate its use of evidence; second, explain how a different approach or more information would make the argument itself better (or possibly worse).

A question stem might look like this:

In many countries, including the USA, the postal service is a quasi-governmental organization whose primary mission is to deliver mail to individuals within the borders of the country. Since, it is argued, mail delivery to rural addresses where the population is sparse cannot be done economically under any acceptable circumstance; the postal service is given a monopoly on mail delivery. Actually, however, mail delivery could be done economically by private corporations as long as each corporation were given a monopoly to service any given area where sparsely populated areas were balanced against densely populated areas.

How would you address this argument?

- 1) Explain how logically persuasive you find this argument... analyze the argument's line of reasoning and use of evidence.

Translation: You should critique the argument. Discuss whether you think it's convincing or not and explain why.

2) Explain what, if anything, would make the argument more valid and convincing or help you to better evaluate its conclusion.

Translation: Spot weak links in the argument and offer changes that would strengthen them.

Attack the Argument

Each argument's stimulus has been intentionally "loaded" with flaws (fallacies) that you should acknowledge and discuss. If you fail to see the more fundamental problems in the argument, you will not get a high score.

The purpose of the essay is for you to critique the reasoning in the argument (the stimulus will tell you to make this evaluation). Your personal opinions are not relevant. Your essay needs to focus on flaws in the argument. While in the Analysis of Issue you write your opinion on a subject, in the Analysis of Argument you write a logical critique of a flawed argument. Thus, the approaches to the two essays should be different.

Evaluate the Argument

Pick out flaws in the argument by identifying its weaknesses:

- ※ What is the argument's conclusion?
- ※ What is the basis of the author's conclusion?
- ※ Do you find the argument persuasive? What makes it persuasive or not persuasive?
- ※ What could be done to strengthen the argument?
- ※ What assumptions does the argument rely upon? (there should be several)

SAMPLE ARGUMENT

For example, the GMAT test may present a statement such as the following for the analysis of an issue:

In many countries, including the USA, the postal service is a quasi-governmental organization whose primary mission is to deliver mail to individuals within the borders of the country. Since, it is argued, mail delivery to rural addresses where the population is sparse cannot be done economically under any acceptable circumstance; the postal service is given a monopoly on mail delivery. Actually, however, mail delivery could be done economically by private corporations as long as each corporation were given a monopoly to service any given area where sparsely populated areas were balanced against densely populated areas.

How would you address this argument?

In the above argument for analysis, the proposition is contained in the last sentence of the stimulus and so the analysis of the argument must focus on this sentence. They are trying to argue for the privatization of the postal system.

I. The proposition regarding the privatization of the post office is based on two questionable

assumptions and is most likely not true:

A. Population in the USA is distributed in such a way that postal market areas can be divided and costly market areas can be balanced against lucrative market areas.

B. Private corporations are more cost effective than quasi-governmental organizations.

II. Postal markets cannot be distributed so that service to any given market is economical:

A. reason for the distribution of population

B. effect of that distribution on geographically contiguous areas

C. effect of that distribution on geographically non-contiguous areas

III. Private corporations are not necessarily more cost efficient than quasi-governmental corporations.

A. case of defense contractors

B. case of private corporations

IV. The case for the privatization of the post office department is based on questionable assumptions.

The idea that the post office department can be privatized is based on two questionable assumptions: In the first place, it can be shown that population in the USA is not distributed so that postal market areas can be divided with the result that costly market areas are balanced against lucrative market areas. In the second place, it can be shown that private corporations are not necessarily more cost effective than quasi-governmental organizations. It is, therefore, most likely that privatization of the post office department cannot be accomplished.

In the first place, due to mechanization, one worker on the farm can support at least three hundred people living in the city. Large combines with relatively small crews can roll across the prairies harvesting 500 ton of wheat in a day, enough to feed hundreds of people for a year. As a result, there has been less and less employment in rural areas and, as a further result, people have left the rural areas for life in the city, creating the contemporary dilemma for postal planners. It is easy to distribute tons of mail to big city dwellers in high rise buildings at a reasonable cost. But who is going to find a cost effective way to deliver a single first class letter twenty miles down a country road in a snowstorm in January? Therefore, postal markets cannot be distributed so that service to any given market is economical using contiguous geographical markets.

Perhaps the answer lies in distributing the cost of mail delivery by balancing a cost intensive market area such as rural up-state New York with a lucrative market area such as New York City. On examination, however, this turns out to be an impossibility because population simply is not distributed in neatly balanced areas for reasons noted in the preceding paragraph. Albany, New York, probably has a greater population than the entire state of Wyoming. Is a single company going to be given Wyoming and Albany as a single market area? If so, that company will not be able to service the area economically because the costs of doing business over such a long distance are extremely high. The current post office department, in effect, already does this and it has found it to be not economical. Clearly, it is also true that postal markets cannot be distributed using noncontiguous geographical markets, so that service to any given market is economical.

Furthermore, not all private corporations are economical. The federal government has always subsidized defense contractors rewarding them for their inefficiencies with huge cost overruns. Besides this, any number of large private corporations have gone bankrupt including Continental Airlines and Pan American Airways. Would any social planners want postal delivery discontinued to any area because a large, privatized postal company declared bankruptcy?

The argument that the post office department can be privatized is based on two questionable assumptions. It is therefore most likely that this argument is invalid (1) because populations are not distributed in such a way that large, regional post offices could be run economically, and (2) because private corporations are not necessarily cost efficient and economical.

Notice that this essay states two assumptions and then spends three paragraphs elaborating on the two main assumptions. The overall structure is tight (perhaps a few sentences could have been edited and paragraphs 2 and 3 condensed into one paragraph). Either way, this is a 5 or 6 essay.

One element here is that problems with the stimulus is strictly assumptions: about the economics of running a post office and the assumption of private sector superiority over public sector. In most of the essays there are glaring logical flaws. We identify these common errors in the next chapter.

Analysis of Argument: Finding Errors

The Usual Suspects: Common Logical Fallacies

We have identified seven logical errors that appear commonly in the essay questions. When writing your essay argument you should explicitly identify the logical flaw. These flaws also tend to occur in the critical reasoning section of the Verbal GMAT, so your preparation here will benefit you when taking the Verbal section.

The E-rater will look for how well you express that you have identified the logical reasoning flaws. When you find an error, specifically identify it in the essay "this is a biased-sample fallacy." The E-rater will detect that you have identified the argument's flaw and will favor your essay.

1. Circular Reasoning

Here, an unsubstantiated assertion is used to justify another unsubstantiated assertion, which is, or at least could be, used to justify the first statement. For instance, Joe and Fred show up at an exclusive club. When asked if they are members, Joe says "I'll vouch for Fred." When Joe is asked for evidence that he's a member, Fred says, "I'll vouch for him."

2. The Biased-Sample Fallacy

The Fallacy of the Biased Sample is committed whenever the data for a statistical inference are drawn from a sample that is not representative of the population under consideration. The data drawn and used to make a generalization is drawn from a group that does not represent the whole.

Here is an argument that commits the fallacy of the biased sample:

In a recent survey conducted by Wall Street Weekly, 80% of the respondents indicated their strong disapproval of increased capital gains taxes. This survey clearly shows that increased capital gains taxes will meet with strong opposition from the electorate.

The data for the inference in this argument are drawn from a sample that is not representative of the entire electorate. Since the survey was conducted of people who invest, not all members of the electorate have an equal chance of being included in the sample. Moreover, persons who read about investing are more likely to have an opinion on the topic of taxes on investment different from the population at large.

3. The Insufficient Sample Fallacy

The Fallacy of the Insufficient Sample is committed whenever an inadequate sample is used to justify the conclusion drawn.

Here's an argument that commits the fallacy of the insufficient sample:

I have worked with 3 people from New York City and found them to be obnoxious, pushy and rude. It is obvious that people from New York City have a bad attitude.

The data for the inference in this argument are insufficient to support the conclusion. Three observations of people are not sufficient to support a conclusion about 10 million.

4. Ad hominen

One of the most often-employed fallacies, ad hominen means "to the man" and indicates an attack that is made upon a person rather than upon the statements that person has made. An example is: "Don't listen to my opponent, he's a homosexual."

5. The Fallacy of Faulty Analogy

Reasoning by analogy functions by comparing two similar things. Because they are alike in various ways, the fallacy is that it is likely they will share another trait as well. Faulty Analogy arguments draw similarities between the things compared that are not relevant to the characteristic being inferred in the conclusion.

Here's an example of a Faulty Analogy fallacy:

Ted and Jim excel at both football and basketball. Since Ted is also a track star, it is likely that Jim also excels at track.

In this example, numerous similarities between Ted and Jim are taken as the basis for the inference that they share additional traits.

6. Straw Man

Here the speaker attributes an argument to an opponent that does not represent the opponent's true position. For instance, a political candidate might charge that his opponent "wants to let all prisoners go free," when in fact his opponent simply favors a highly limited furlough system. The person is portrayed as someone that they are not.

7. The "After This, Therefore, Because of This" Fallacy (Post hoc ergo propter hoc)

This is a "false cause" fallacy in which something is associated with something else because of mere proximity of time. One often encounters - in news stories- people assuming that because one thing happened after another, the first caused it, as with "I touched a toad, I have a wart, the toad caused the wart." The error in arguments that commit this fallacy is that their conclusions are causal claims that are not sufficiently substantiated by the evidence.

Here are two examples of the *After This, Therefore Because of This Fallacy*:

Ten minutes after walking into the auditorium, I began to feel sick to my stomach. There must have been something in the air in that building that caused my nausea.

The stock market declined shortly after the election of the president, thus indicating the lack of confidence the business community has in the new administration.

In the first example, a causal connection is posited between two events simply on the basis of one occurring before the other. Without further evidence to support it, the causal claim based on the correlation is premature.

The second example is typical of modern news reporting. The only evidence offered in this argument to support the implicit causal claim that the decline in the stock market was caused by the election of the president is the fact that election preceded the decline. While this may have been a causal factor in the decline of the stock market, to argue that it is the cause without additional information and auxiliary hypotheses that make a causal connection plausible is to commit the After This, Therefore, Because of This Fallacy.

8. The Either-or Thinking

This is the so-called black-or-white fallacy. Essentially, it says "Either you believe what I'm saying or you must believe exactly the opposite." Here is an example of the black-or-white fallacy:

Since you don't believe that the earth is teetering on the edge of destruction, you must believe that pollution and other adverse effects that man has on the environment are of no concern whatsoever.

The argument above assumes that there are only two possible alternatives open to us. There is no room for a middle ground.

9. The "All Things are Equal" Fallacy

This fallacy is committed when it is assumed without justification that background conditions have remained the same at different times/locations. In most instances this is an unwarranted assumption for the simple reason that things rarely remain the same over extended periods of time, and things rarely remain the same from place to place.

The last Democrat winner of the New Hampshire primary won the general election. This year, the winner of the New Hampshire primary will win the general election.

The assumption operative in this argument is that nothing has changed since the last primary. No evidence or justification is offered for this assumption.

10. The Fallacy of Equivocation

The *Fallacy of Equivocation* occurs when a word or phrase that has more than one meaning is employed in different meanings throughout the argument.

11. Non Sequitor

This means "does not follow," which is short for: the conclusion does not follow from the premise. To say, "The house is white; therefore it must be big" is an example. It may be a big house but there is no intrinsic connection with its being white.

12. Argumentum ad populum

A group of kindergartners are studying a frog, trying to determine its sex. "I wonder if it's a boy frog or a girl frog," says one student. "I know how we can tell!" pipes up another. "All right, how?" asks the teacher, resigned to the worst. Beams the child: "We can vote."

This is argumentum ad populum, the belief that truth can be determined by more or less putting it to a vote. Democracy is a very nice thing, but it doesn't determine truth. Polls are good for telling you what people think, not whether those thoughts are correct. We are constantly bombarded with

ad populum arguments. Often they simply reflect careful wording. Ask people if they want cleaner air and they'll say sure, who doesn't? Ask if they want cleaner air that will be imperceptibly cleaner to all except the most accurate instruments and say that you'll have to raise their gasoline prices to do it and you're going to lose a lot of those yeses. But the worst thing about ad populum arguments is that they assume expertise where it simply cannot be assumed. You don't need expertise to show that cleaner air is in general a good idea. You do need expertise to determine that making the air cleaner than it has already been made is good public policy in light of numerous conflicting considerations and that certain ways of getting the air cleaner are better than others on the edge of destruction, you must believe that pollution and other adverse effects that man has on the environment are of no concern whatsoever."

13. Irrational appeals

These urge us to accept ideas at face value or on some basis other than their reasonableness. In effect, they say, "You don't have to think about this, there is no danger of error here." Included in false appeals are appeals to common sense, appeals to emotion, and appeals to authority. All such appeals are not necessarily irrational. They may, indeed, encourage critical thinking. But if used in the sense that they should be considered in a vacuum, then they are fallacious.

Analysis of Argument: Template

TEMPLATE

As with the Issue essay, there is no single "correct," way to organize an Argument essay. In our view, however, your essay should include separate "introduction" and "conclusion" paragraphs, as well as at least two "body" paragraphs in which you develop your critique of the stated argument. The following template spells out this structure in more detail, and each of the sample Analysis of Argument essays in this book follow this basic pattern.

You do not have to adhere strictly to this format in order to write an effective Argument essay. You may find that some other form works better for you, especially for the body of your essay. Also, the numbers of sentences indicated for each paragraph here are merely suggestions or guidelines, not hard-and-fast rules.

(Note: The transitional phrases used here are purposely simplistic; do not simply "parrot" them word-for-word in your essay or adopt a mechanistic fill-in the blank approach. If you do, your essay might appear stilted or contrived.)

Introductory Paragraph (2-4 sentences)

Try to accomplish three goals in your introductory paragraph:

- ▲ Briefly restate the argument.
- ▲ Briefly trace the argument's line of reasoning.
- ▲ Indicate the extent to which the argument is logically convincing.
- ▲ If possible, sum up your arguments in one sentence (or two brief sentences).

Here's a sample template for the first paragraph that accomplishes these goals:

The author concludes that _____, because _____. The author's line of reasoning is that _____. This argument is unconvincing for several reasons; it is _____ and it uses _____.

First Body Paragraph (3-5 sentences)

In the first body paragraph your goal is to critique one of the following:

- ▲ The reasoning of the argument
- ▲ One of the premises of the argument
- ▲ One of the assumptions of the argument

Here's a sample template for this paragraph that accomplishes this goal:

First of all, _____ **is based upon the questionable assumption** _____ **. That** _____ **, however,** _____. **Moreover,** _____.

Second Body Paragraph (3-4 sentences)

The purpose of the second paragraph is to address one of the following:

- ▲ The reasoning of the argument
- ▲ One of the premises of the argument
- ▲ One of the assumptions of the argument

Here's a sample template for this paragraph that accomplishes this goal:

Secondly, the author assumes that _____. **However,** _____. **It seems equally reasonable to assume that** _____.

Third (and optional Fourth) Body Paragraph

In this paragraph your goal is to critique one of the following:

- ▲ The reasoning of the argument
- ▲ One of the premises of the argument
- ▲ One of the assumptions of the argument

Here's a sample template for this paragraph that accomplishes this goal:

Finally, _____. **The author fails to consider** _____. **For example,** _____. **Because the author's argument** _____.

Final Paragraph (2-3 sentences)

In the final paragraph your goals are to:

- ▲ Summarize your critique of the argument
- ▲ State the main point of your essay

The final paragraph is not the place to introduce new arguments or issues. Sample template:

In sum, I agree that _____. **However,** _____; **on balance,** _____.

Analysis of Argument: Timing

How to write a 300-word essay in 30 minutes

Sample Essay:

The problem of poorly trained police officers that has plagued New York City should become less serious in the future. The City has initiated comprehensive guidelines that oblige police officers in multiculturalism and proper ways to deal with the city's ethnic groups.

Explain how logically persuasive you find this argument. In discussing your viewpoint, analyze the argument's line of reasoning and its use of evidence. Also explain what, if anything, would make the argument more valid and convincing or help you to better evaluate its conclusion.

Step 1: Dissect the issue/argument (2 minutes)

What is the topic and scope of the argument?

topic: the problem of poorly trained police officers

scope: a given solution, centering on mandatory classes

The argument's conclusion?

The problem of poorly trained police officers that has plagued New York City should become a less serious in the future.

What's the evidence?

The City has initiated comprehensive guidelines that oblige police officers in multiculturalism and proper ways to deal with the city's ethnic groups.

Arguments typically will be structured in one of two ways:

- 1) conclusion... because.... evidence
- 2) evidence.... therefore.... conclusion

Summarize the argument:

The problem of poor police officers will become less serious...

(conclusion)

multiculturalism training

(evidence)

How does the argument use its evidence?

It uses evidence of multiculturalism training as evidence to conclude that future improvement is likely.

Step 2: Select the points you will make (5 minutes)

Does the argument make any assumptions? That is, are there gaps between evidence and conclusion?

1. Multiculturalism training will improve the current situation
2. The present police force has poor training in multicultural issues
3. The current police officers in the field will go back for re-training.

Under what circumstances would these assumptions be valid?

1. Evidence making it clear that the present police officers have not already had multicultural training.
2. Evidence showing that multicultural training makes better police officers.
3. Evidence showing that untrained police officers will not be teaching in the future.

Step 3: Organize (1 minute)

Use the pages

Sketch in the outline.

- a. State a clear thesis for the essay.
- b. Make each heading correspond to a paragraph.
- c. Make sure that there are at least five paragraphs.
- d. Make sure that each heading corresponds to a topic sentence.
- e. Be sure that there is a beginning and ending paragraph, which tie the essay together.

Step 4: Type your essay (20 minutes)

Write your paragraphs in the essay with great care.

- a. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, which relates to the central idea of the entire essay.
- b. Everything in each paragraph should support the idea in the topic sentence of the paragraph in (4a) above. For each paragraph, state an idea then give examples to support the idea or explain the idea completely.

Step 5: Proofread the essay (2 minutes)

Make sure your "key" words: transitional phrases, major points, examples, are properly spelled so that the E-rater may identify them properly and know that you have a well written essay.

Chapter 4: About the E-rater

What the E-rater Grades

The E-rater is a distant cousin of the search engine robots that scan content of web sites to determine how relevant they are to search terms (such as that used by Alta Vista or the "concept searching" Excite search engine). The E-rater will read your essays and look for phrases that indicate competent reasoning.

The E-rater uses a stored battery of hundreds graded essays for each of the 280 essay questions. The E-rater has sample 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 score essays for each topic. The E-rater will evaluate your essay in terms of the stored essays in the E-rater's database. If the essay you wrote resembles the stored "6" essays in the E-rater's database, you will get that score. If your essay better resembles the "5's" in the E-rater's memory, you will get a "5" from the E-rater.

That is why it is so important to read the 20 sample essays we have. You will see how well written arguments are structured and you will learn the proper style necessary to impress both the E-rater and the human grader.

What the E-rater doesn't grade

The E-rater cannot detect certain things, such as humor, spelling errors or grammar. It analyzes structure through using transitional phrases, paragraph changes, etc. It evaluates content through comparing your score to that of other students. If you have a brilliant argument that uses an unusual argument style, the E-rater will not detect it.

The E-rater does, however, detect spelling and grammar indirectly. If your transition phrases and logical identifiers (e.g.- "therefore", "for example") are not properly spelled the E-rater will not detect them. Since the E-rater uses the presence of such transitional phrases as an indicator of effective writing, you are indirectly penalized if they are not spelled correctly.

Strategy Changes

Does the E-rater impact human graders?

The E-rater potentially puts pressure on human graders. Human graders will create problems if they constantly disagree with the E-rater and force third graders to look over the essay (this raises cost). Although this is speculative and ETS employees refuse to confirm it, the only logical conclusion is that human graders must try to conform to E-rater standards. In this way, the E-rater acts as a managerial tool to double-check graders and keep them in line. Subjectivity and bias are an anathema to standardized tests such as the GMAT. The bottom line: don't rely on your essay being appealing to the human grader and hope he will give you a high grade to counter a low E-rater grade. Try to follow the E-rater rules.

What are the implications for the GMAT student?

On the Issue Essay:

You should not try any bold or original approaches in your essay. The essay should be written in a simple and organized fashion. If you write a boldly original piece, do not expect the human grader to acknowledge the quality of your writing.

On the Argument Essay:

The E-rater makes more sense on the Argument Essay because it is able to tell if you have identified the argument's logical flaw. The E-rater stores hundreds of essays for each essay question and you should use keywords that correspond the stored "6" essays. When you have identified the logical flaws the essay questions, (use our "usual suspects" section to identify logical flaws), make sure to state the precise logical flaws. This way the E-rater is able to detect that you have identified the correct logical flaws.

Fooling the E-rater:

1. Make your essay highly rigid in structure. Make it look, in its organization, like other 5 and 6 essays.
2. Clearly demarcate sections using phrases such as "for example", "therefore", etc..
3. Use qualifiers judiciously. The E-rater will associate careful use of qualifiers with high scorers.
4. Read our 20 Real Essays essays to get a flavor for how "6" score writing is done.

5. Use the exact terminology we do in the Usual Suspects section to identify logical reasoning flaws in the Argument Section.

Errors that will ruin your score with the E-rater (DO NOT):

1. Write an essay in a unique and creative fashion. The E-rater will be evaluating you relative to other writers, so a unique argument structure will always backfire.

2. Misspell key phrases, such as "for example" and "therefore". The E-rater will not pick this up and assume that you did not use transition phrases.

3. Throw in jokes and other unneeded commentary. The E-rater will not detect the meaning under your writing, only its structure, so making clever comments will not raise your score.

4. Use unusual references that no other business school student would use. The E-rater uses other scorers as a template based on how well you resemble other scorers. On the Analysis of Issue question, if you do use unusual examples, try to use concept keywords and a tight structure.

5. Avoid or overuse qualifiers such as "likely", "should", etc.. (link to qualifiers). Smart people use qualifiers, which means the high scorers in the E-rater's database will be filled with essays saturated with qualifiers. However, do not overuse qualifiers or it will dilute your essay.

6. Use a unique and clever rhetorical device that spices up your essay.

7. Follow Steve Jobs' clever advertising campaign for Apple "Think Different". For the AWA it is "Think the Same". You want to write as "6" scorers write. The Analysis of Issue section, in particular, is an exercise in conformity. Write opinions in the mainstream of intellectual thought.

E-rater: International Students

How international students should tackle the AWA and the E-rater.

The conventions for the AWA can be summarized in a single statement: written English requires that each paragraph be developed directly away from a topic (or thesis) sentence or directly towards a topic (or thesis) sentence. The former is known as deductive development; the latter is known as inductive development. Since this is the case for all English written prose it should be obvious that writers in English have less freedom to wander from the main point of their discourse than writers in other languages. English expository prose style must be direct and to the point even though it is necessary to support each main idea with examples, explanations, and illustrations. The thesis (or topic sentence) must contain the germ of the idea that permeates the entire paragraph. Each example or illustration must be connected to that idea with transitional markers such as for example, thus, or moreover.

The E-rater speaks "American"

Your essays should be written in "American", not "English". Phrases that are more commonly spoken in English (indeed, hence, etc..) are less common in "American." Phrases that are commonly spoken in English are unlikely to be picked up by the E-rater, which picks up phrases used among high scorers (who are overwhelmingly American).

Students from the U.K., Hong Kong, India and other Commonwealth nations should adjust their syntax, style and language to better suit the flavor of English used in America. That is the language of the E-rater. Since the "6" essays stored in the E-rater were primarily written by

Americans, you must make sure your writing style is American. Avoid any local jargon or particularly any unusual transitional phrases (e.g. "heretofore"). Got that mate? In addition, the overwhelmingly American graders will have an easier time with arguments written in American.

The solution is to read *all of our sample essays* and American scholarly journals to see how American writers structure arguments.

Chapter 5: Crash Course in Effective Writing

Once you have mastered the previous chapters and have an overall idea of what you want to say in your essay, you can focus on the best way to express it. This part of the E-Rater Guide will develop the skills you need to create well-developed and well-written essays.

We have divided the lessons for writing into two parts:

- Writing Style: learn to be clear, concise and forceful, and;
- Grammar Rules (how to follow accepted grammar rules).

5a. Writing Style

5a(1). Fill Sentences

Streamline your essay by avoiding unnecessary sentences.

- *Avoid sentences that do not advance your argument.
- *Avoid asking a question only to answer it.
- *Avoid sentences that announce that you are shifting the topic. Use transitional phrases instead of writing sentences to change your subject.

FILL: Who should be the next president? I think Mike Dukakis should give it another try.

TO THE POINT: Mike Dukakis should make a second bid for the presidency.

Exercise 1: Avoid "fill" sentences that do not serve a purpose.

Condense the two-sentence groups into one sentence.

1. Who was Abraham Lincoln? He was a President of the United States.
2. Patton was a famous general. He was renowned for his ability to surprise the enemy.
3. The twister destroyed three city blocks. Many buildings collapsed because of the twister.

answers below:

Answers

1. Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States.
2. General Patton was famous for his ability to surprise the enemy.
3. Many buildings were destroyed by the twister that destroyed three city blocks.

5a(2). Be Concise

Do not use several words when one will do. Writers tend to add phrases like "take into consideration" in order to sound scholarly. This only makes the text sound inflated and sophomoric. Don't use excessive and unnecessary verbiage.

WORDY: I am of the opinion that the said managers should be admonished for their utilization of customer response services.

CONCISE: We should tell the managers to improve customer service.

Exercise 2: Wordy Phrases

Shorten the sentence. (see answers)

1. This internet company is not prepared to expand at this point in time.
2. In light of the fact that Roger has worked with much effort and diligence to build this site, it would be a smart move to give him the contract.
3. The airline has a problem with always having arrivals that come at least an hour late, despite the fact that the leaders of the airline promise that promptness is a goal which has a high priority for all the employees involved.
4. In spite of the fact that she only has a little bit of experience in photography right now, she will probably do well in the future because she has a great deal of motivation to succeed in her chosen profession.
5. The United States is not in a position to spend more money to alleviate the suffering of the people of other countries considering the problems of its own citizens.

see answers below

Answers

1. The internet company is not prepared to expand now.
2. Since Roger has worked for this site so carefully, we should award him the contract.
3. Flights are always at least an hour late on this airline, though its leaders promise that promptness is a high priority for all its employees.
4. Although she is inexperienced in photography, she will probably succeed because she is motivated.
5. The United States cannot spend more money to alleviate other countries' suffering when its own citizens suffer.

5a(3). Qualification

Writing an AWA essay on the Analysis of Issue is walking a tight rope. You have to be persuasive about your argument, yet you cannot be excessively one-sided. The Analysis of Issue questions do not have a clear-cut "answer" to the essay topic, so do not overstate your case. To express that you are reasonable, sporadically use qualifiers such as fairly, rather, somewhat, relatively, and such

expressions as seems to be, a little, and a certain amount of. However, excessive use of qualification will dilute your argument and weaken the essay.

WORDY: The Hess spy case was rather serious breach of national security and likely helped the Soviets.

CONCISE: The Hess spy case breached national security and helped the Soviets.

1. You yourself are the very best person to decide what you should do for a living.
2. It is possible that the author overstates his case somewhat.
3. The president perhaps should use a certain amount of diplomacy before he resorts to force.
4. In Italy, I found about the best food I have ever eaten.
5. Needless to say, children should be taught to cooperate at home and in school.

Answers:

1. You are the best person to decide what you should do for a living.
 2. The author overstates his case somewhat.
 3. The president should use diplomacy before he resorts to force.
 4. In Italy I found the best food I have ever eaten.
 5. Children should be taught to cooperate at home and in school.
- (If there's no need to say it, don't!)

5a(4). Start Strong

Try not to begin a sentence with There is, There are, or It is. These roundabout expressions usually indicate that you are trying to distance yourself from the position you are taking. Weak openings usually result from writing before you think- hedging until you find out what you want to say.

5a(5). Active & Passive Voice

The passive voice is weak because it diminishes accountability. When you use the active voice the verb performs an action. The passive voice does not directly suggest that the user does something.

The passive voice does have value under certain circumstances. For instance, if you want to express something without assigning blame or if there is a question of responsibility. For example: "collateral damage has taken place". The sentence blames no one and does not assign who actually did it.

PASSIVE: The assignment was completed by Joe in record time.

ACTIVE: Joe completed the assignment in record time.

How is it Graded?

Both the E-rater and the human grader can detect the passive voice and it will lower your score. Admissions officers will also frown on it.

International Students:

Certain languages, such as French, use more passives. Be careful to adjust your style.

Exercises: rewrite the sentences

1. Garbage collectors should be generously rewarded for their dirty, smelly labors.
2. The conditions of the contract agreement were ironed out minutes before the strike deadline.
3. The minutes of the City Council meeting should be taken by the city clerk.
4. With sugar, water, or salt, many ailments contracted in less developed countries could be treated.
5. Test results were distributed with no concern for confidentiality.
6. The report was compiled by a number of field anthropologists and marriage experts.

Answers:

1. incorrect: Garbage collectors should be generously rewarded for their dirty, smelly labors.
correct: City government should generously reward garbage collectors for their dirty, smelly labors.
2. incorrect: The conditions of the contract agreement were ironed out minutes before the strike deadline.
correct: Negotiators ironed out the conditions of the contract agreement minutes before the strike deadline.
3. incorrect: The minutes of the City Council meeting should be taken by the city clerk.
correct: The city clerk should take the minutes of the City Council meeting.
4. incorrect: With sugar, water, or salt, many ailments contracted in less developed countries could be treated.
correct: With sugar, water, or salt, doctors can treat many of the ailments that citizens of less developed countries contract.
5. incorrect: Test results were distributed with no concern for confidentiality.
correct: The teacher distributed test results with no concern for confidentiality.
6. incorrect: The report was compiled by a number of field anthropologists and marriage experts.
correct: A number of field anthropologists and marriage experts compiled the report.

5a(6). Self-Reference

Effective writers should avoid such unneeded phrases as "I believe," "I feel," and "in my opinion." The grader knows whose opinion is being expressed and he need not be reminded.

WEAK: I am of the opinion that excessive self-reference may add a level of pomposity to an otherwise effective essay.

FORCEFUL: Excessive self-reference may add a level of pomposity to an otherwise effective essay.

Self-reference, like qualification, is effective when used sparingly.

1. I must emphasize that I am not saying the author does not have a point.
2. If I were a college president, I would implement several specific reforms to combat apathy.
3. It is my belief that either alternative would prove disastrous.

Answers

1. The author has a point.
2. College presidents should implement several specific reforms to combat apathy.
3. Either alternative would prove disastrous.

5a(7). Redundancy

Redundancy is the unnecessary repetition of an idea. It is redundant to say "a beginner lacking experience." The word beginner implies lack of experience by itself. You may eliminate redundant words or phrases without changing the meaning of the sentence. Watch out for words that add nothing to the sense of the sentence.

Here are some common redundancies:

Redundant Phrase	Concise Phrase
1. refer back	to
2. Few in number	few
3. Small-sized	small
4. Grouped together	grouped
5. In my own personal opinion	in my opinion
6. End result	result
7. Serious crisis	crisis
8. New initiatives	initiatives

Redundancy often results from carelessness, but you can easily eliminate redundant elements when proofreading.

1. Those who can follow directions are few in number.
2. She has deliberately chosen to change careers.
3. Dialogue opens up many doors to compromise.
4. The ultimate conclusion is that environmental and economic concerns are intertwined.

Answers

1. Few people can follow directions.
2. She has chosen to change careers.
3. Dialogue opens many doors to compromise.
4. The conclusion is that environmental and economic concerns are intertwined.

5a(8): Vague Writing

Don't just ramble on when you're writing your GMAT essays. Choose specific, descriptive words. Vague language weakens your writing because it forces the reader to guess what you mean instead of concentrating fully on your ideas and style.

WEAK: Brown is highly educated.

FORCEFUL: Brown has a master's degree in business administration.

WEAK: She is a great communicator.

FORCEFUL: She speaks persuasively.

Notice that sometimes, to be more specific and concrete, you will have to use more words than you might with vague language. This principle is not in conflict with the general objective of concision. Being concise may mean eliminating unnecessary words. Avoiding vagueness may mean adding necessary words to illustrate your point.

1. The principal told John that he should not even think about coming back to school until he changed his ways.
2. The police detective had to seek the permission of the lawyer to question the suspect.
3. Thousands of species of animals were destroyed when the last ice age occurred.
4. The secretary was unable to complete the task that had been assigned.

Answers

1. The principal told John that he could not return to school until his behavior improved.
2. The police detective had to ask the lawyer for permission to question the suspect.
3. Thousands of animal species were destroyed in the last ice age.
4. The secretary was unable to type the document.

5a(9). Cliche

Cliches are overused expressions, expressions that may once have seemed colorful and powerful but are now dull and worn out. Time pressure and anxiety may make you lose focus; and that is when cliches may slip into your writing. A reliance on cliches will suggest you are a lazy thinker. Keep them out of your essay.

WEAK: Performance in a crisis is the acid test for a leader.

FORCEFUL: Performance in a crisis is the best indicator of a leader's abilities.

Putting a cliché in quotation marks in order to indicate your distance from the cliché does not strengthen the sentence. If anything, it just makes weak writing more noticeable. Notice whether or not you use clichés. If you do, ask yourself if you could substitute more specific language for the cliché.

International Students: You should avoid any regional expressions. Students from Britain and the commonwealth nations should particularly beware of using local expressions that are not used in America.

Exercises

1. You have to take this new fad with a grain of salt.
2. The politician reminds me of Abraham Lincoln: He's like a diamond in the rough.
3. A ballpark estimate of the number of fans in the stadium would be 120,000.

Answers

1. You need not take this new fad very seriously; it will surely pass.
2. The politician reminds me of Abraham Lincoln with his rough appearance and warm heart.
3. I estimate that 120,000 fans were in the stadium.

5a(10). Jargon

Jargon includes two categories of words that you should avoid. First is the specialized vocabulary of a group, such as that used by a group of people such as doctors, lawyers, or baseball coaches. Second is the overly inflated and complex language that burdens many student essays. You will not impress anyone with big words that do not fit the tone or context of your essay, especially if you misuse them.

If you are not certain of a word's meaning or appropriateness, leave it out. An appropriate word, even a simple one, will add impact to your argument. As you come across words you are unsure of, ask yourself "Would a reader in a different field be able to understand exactly what I mean from the words I've chosen?" "Is there any way I can say the same thing more simply?"

MBA candidates are particularly prone to using MBA jargon. When you go to business school you will find that MBAs have a language of their own with words such as "incentivize" or "M & A". Indeed, you will find that a large part of the lasting benefit of business school is learning the proper MBA language so that you will better relate with the MBAs who dominate the business world.

For now, however, the GMAT is not the place for MBA jargon or any jargon for that matter. Keep these phrases inside of big glass buildings (replace them with the words in parenthesis):

- optimize
- time frame
- utilize (use)
- finalize (end, complete)
- conceptualize (imagine, think)

- maximize
- originate (start, begin)
- facilitate (help, speed up)
- bottom line
- parameter (boundary, limit)
- user-friendly (responsive, flexible, easy-to-understand)
- input/output
- blindside
- downside
- ongoing (continuing)

1. With reference to the poem, I submit that the second and third stanzas connote a certain despair.
2. Allow me to elucidate my position: This horse is the epitome, the very quintessence of equine excellence.

Answers:

1. When the poet wrote the second and third stanzas, he must have felt despair.
2. This is a fine horse.

5b. Grammar & Syntax

We cover the main grammar and syntax issues most students have. If your English skills are strong, skim through most of the material.

5b(1). Subject-Verb Agreement

The verb and subject must agree. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb must be plural. Test writers will try to fool you by using writing unusual phrases that make it difficult to tell if the subject is singular or plural.

1) If a singular subject is separated by a comma from an accompanying phrase, it remains singular:

The child, together with his grandmother and his parents, is going to the beach.

wrong: Frank, accompanied by his student, were at the studio.

right: Frank, accompanied by his student, was at the studio.

wrong: His mastery of several sports and the social graces make him a sought-after prom date.

right: His mastery of several sports and the social graces makes him a sought-after prom date.

His is singular and makes is singular.

2) Collective nouns, such as family, majority, audience, and committee are singular when they act in a collective fashion or represent one group. They are plural when they act as individuals.

Collective nouns will usually be singular in Sentence Correction sentences.

right: She is a really good swimmer.

"really" is acting as an adverb to modify the adjective "good"

wrong: The new student speaks bad.

right: The new student speaks badly.

"Badly" modifies how the student speaks.

2. Errors of Adjectives with Verbs of Sense.

The following verbs of sense are described by ADJECTIVES:

be look smell taste feel seem

wrong: After the three-week vacation, she looked very well.

right: After the three-week vacation, she looked very good.

NOTE: "She is well" is also correct in the meaning of "She is healthy" or in describing a person's well-being.

wrong: The strawberry shortcake tastes deliciously.

right: The strawberry shortcake tastes delicious.

3. Location of Modification

- A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes another part of the sentence.
- You should place a modifier as close as possible to what it is modifying.
- Modifiers sometimes appear to modify words that they don't actually modify.

Test writers often utilize tricks to confuse students with modification:

- * That/which clauses, especially ones that come at the end of sentences
- * Sentences beginning or ending with descriptive phrases

Examples.

Faulty modifications often inadvertently change the meaning of sentences.

1. On arriving at the train station, his friends met him and took him immediately to his speaking engagement in Springfield.

This sounds as if the friends arrived at the train station. It should say... "When Jay arrived at the train station, his friends met him..."

??? Where did the Jay come from?? Sometimes one of the answer choices might inject new names into a sentence. This is appropriate here since the pronouns had no specific nouns they referred to.

Tricks: note that **its** is a possessive of **it**, and **it's** is the contraction of it and is.

5b3. Pronouns

It is often difficult to tell what noun a pronoun replaces and what case (subjective or objective) should be used.

Which pronoun you use depends on if the pronoun is being used as the subject or the object of a sentence.

Subject	Objective
he	him
she	her

who whom
I me
they them
we us

A. Pronoun Subject-Object.

Check if a pronoun is the SUBJECT or the OBJECT of a verb or preposition.

wrong: How could she blame you and he for the accident?

right: How could she blame you and him for the accident?

Example

(She/her) was better suited.

Here the pronoun is the subject of the verb suited, meaning, "she" acts as the subject.

WHO/WHOM

If the pronoun is acting as a subject, it should be who. If it is acting as an object, it should be whom.

Example

I don't know (who/whom) Steven meant.

Whom is in the object form because it is the object of meant (with Steve as the subject).

B. Check if the pronoun and its verb agree in number.

Remember that the following are singular:

anyone anything each
either everyone everything
neither no one nothing
what whatever whoever

These are **plural**:

both many several others few

1) wrong: Everyone on the project have to come to the meeting.

right: Everyone on the project has to come to the meeting.

The forms "either... or" and "neither.. .nor" are singular and take a singular verb. However, if the noun closest to the verb in the "neither..nor or either...or" is plural, then the verb is plural.

2) wrong: Neither his bodyguards nor he was there.

right: Neither he nor his bodyguards were there.

3) wrong: Either his bodyguards or he is bringing it.

right: Either he or his bodyguards are bringing it.

C. Check if possessive pronouns agree in person and number.

1) wrong: Some of you will have to bring their own beer.

right: Some of you will have to bring your own beer.

Some is singular.

2) wrong: If anyone comes over, take their name.

right: If anyone comes over, take his name.

The subject is *anyone*, which is singular, which requires a singular pronoun (his).

D. "Objects" of to be verbs are in the subject form.

1) wrong: It must have been her who called.

right: It must have been she who called.

E. A relative pronoun (which, that or who) refers to the word preceding it. If the meaning is unclear, the pronoun is in the wrong position. The word which introduces non-essential clauses, that introduces essential clauses. Who refers to individuals, that refers to a group of persons, class, type, or species.

1) wrong: The line at the bank was very slow, which made me late.

right: I was late because of the line at the bank.

OR The line at the bank made me late.

F. In forms using impersonal pronouns, use either "one.. one's/his or her" or "you.. your."

1) wrong: One should have their teeth checked every six months.

right: One should have one's/his or her teeth checked six months.

OR: You should have your teeth checked every six months.

2) wrong: One should take your responsibilities seriously.

right: One should take one's/his or her responsibilities seriously.

OR: You should take your responsibilities seriously.

3. Location of Modification

- A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes another part of the sentence.
- You should place a modifier as close as possible to what it is modifying.
- Modifiers sometimes appear to modify words that they don't actually modify.

Test writers often utilize tricks to confuse students with modification:

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- * Sentences beginning or ending with descriptive phrases

Examples.

Faulty modifications often inadvertently change the meaning of sentences.

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This sounds as if the friends arrived at the train station. It should say... "When Jay arrived at the train station, his friends met him..."

??? Where did the Jay come from?? Sometimes one of the answer choices might inject new names into a sentence. This is appropriate here since the pronouns had no specific nouns they referred to.

Tricks: note that **its** is a possessive of **it**, and **it's** is the contraction of it and is.

5b(4). Parallelism

Similar elements in a list should be in similar form.

Matching constructions must be expressed in parallel form. It is often rhetorically effective to use a particular construction several times in succession, in order to provide emphasis. Here is an example.

As a naturalist, Teddy Roosevelt made many exploration discoveries, as a military leader he helped to inspire victory in Cuba, and as a statesman he established America as a superpower.

Writers often use a parallel structure for dissimilar items.

wrong: They are sturdy, attractive, and cost only a dollar each. (The adjectives sturdy and attractive, but cannot be understood before cost only a dollar each.)

right: They are sturdy and attractive, and they cost only a dollar each.

Parallel constructions must be expressed in parallel grammatical form: all nouns, all infinitives, all gerunds, all prepositional phrases, or all clauses must agree.

wrong: All business students should learn word processing, accounting, and how to program computers.

right: All business students should learn word processing, accounting, and computer programming.

This principle applies to any words that might begin each item in a series: prepositions (in, on, by, with), articles (the, a, an), helping verbs (had, has, would) and possessives (his, her, our).

Either repeat the word before every element in a series or include it only before the first item. Anything else violates the rules of parallelism.

In effect, your treatment of the second element of the series determines the form of all subsequent elements:

wrong: He invested his money in stocks, in real estate, and a home for retired performers.

right: He invested his money in stocks, in real estate, and in a home for retired performers.

When proofreading, check that each item in the series agrees with the word or phrase that begins the series. In the above example, invested his money is the common phrase that each item shares. You would read, "He invested his money in real estate, (invested his money) in stocks, and (invested his money) in a home for retired performers."

5b5. Voice Shifting

Since you are asked to write an explanatory essay, however, an occasional self-reference may be appropriate. You may even call yourself "I" if you want, as long as you keep the number of first-person pronouns to a minimum. Less egocentric ways of referring to the narrator include "we" and "one." If these more formal ways of writing seem stilted, stay with "I."

- In my lifetime, I have seen many challenges to the principle of free speech.
- We can see...
- One must admit...

The method of self-reference you select is called the narrative voice of your essay. Any of the above narrative voices are acceptable. Nevertheless, whichever you choose, you must be careful not to shift narrative voice in your essay. If you use "I" in the first sentence, for example, do not use "we" in a later sentence.

INCORRECT: In my lifetime, I have seen many challenges to the principle of free speech. We can see how a free society can get too complacent when free speech is taken for granted.

It is likewise wrong to shift from "you" to "one"

INCORRECT: Just by following the news, you can readily see how politicians have a vested interest in pleasing powerful interest groups. But one should not generalize about this tendency.

5b6. Colloquialisms

Conversational speech is filled with slang and colloquial expressions. However, you should avoid slang on the GMAT analytical writing assessment. Slang terms and colloquialisms can be confusing to the reader, since these expressions are not universally understood. Even worse, such informal writing may give readers the impression that you are poorly educated or arrogant.

INAPPROPRIATE: He is really into gardening.

CORRECT: He enjoys gardening.

INAPPROPRIATE: She plays a wicked game of tennis.

CORRECT: She excels in tennis.

5b7. Sentences

Beware of two common errors:

Sentence fragment: a statement with no independent clause

Run-on sentence: two or more independent clauses that are improperly connected

Sentence Fragments

Every sentence in formal writing must have an independent clause: a clause that expresses a complete thought and can stand alone. Dependent clauses do not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone. Errors are made when dependent clauses are used. Independent clauses contain a subject and a predicate and do not begin with a subordinate conjunction such as:

after	as	while
if	provided that	before
so that	though	where
whenever	whether	than
although	because	unless
in order	since	that

NOTE: Beginning single-clause sentences with coordinate conjunctions-and, but, or, nor, for-is acceptable in moderation, although some readers may object to beginning a sentence with and.

INCORRECT: Global warming. That is what the scientists and journalists are worried about this month.

CORRECT: Global warming is the cause of concern for scientists and journalists this month.

INCORRECT: Seattle is a wonderful place to live. Having mountains, ocean, and forests all within easy driving distance. If you can ignore the rain.

CORRECT: Seattle is a wonderful place to live, with mountains, ocean, and forests all within easy driving distance. However, it certainly does rain often.

INCORRECT: Why do I think the author's position is preposterous? Because he makes generalizations that I know are untrue.

CORRECT: I think the author's position is preposterous because he makes generalizations that I know are untrue.

NOTE: Beginning single-clause sentences with coordinate conjunctions-and, but, or, nor, and for-

is acceptable in moderation, although some readers may object to beginning a sentence with and.

CORRECT: Most people would agree that indigent patients should receive wonderful health care. But every treatment has its price.

Run-On Sentences

Time pressure may also cause you to write two or more sentences as one. When you proofread your essays, watch out for independent clauses that are not joined with any punctuation at all or are only joined with a comma.

RUN-ON SENTENCE: Current insurance practices are unfair they discriminate against the people who need insurance most.

You can repair run-on sentences in two ways. First, you could use a period to make separate sentences of the independent clauses.

The second method of repairing a run-on sentence is usually the most effective. Use a conjunction to turn an independent clause into a dependent one and to make explicit how the clauses are related.

CORRECT: Current insurance practices are unfair, in that they discriminate against the people who need insurance most.

One cause of run-on sentences is the misuse of adverbs like however, nevertheless, furthermore, likewise, and therefore.

RUN-ON SENTENCE: Current insurance practices are discriminatory, furthermore they make insurance too expensive for the poor.

CORRECT: Current insurance practices are discriminatory. Furthermore, they make insurance too expensive for the poor.

Example

1. However much she tries to act like a Southern belle, she cannot hide her roots. The daughter of a Yankee fisherman, taciturn and always polite.

Answer:

The daughter of a Yankee fisherman is a sentence fragment, since the group of words contains no verb.

Sample Rewrite: However much she tries to act like a Southern belle, she cannot hide her roots. She will always be the daughter of a Yankee fisherman, taciturn and ever polite.

5b8. Commas

THE COMMA

The comma is the most abused punctuation mark, possibly because writers are sometimes so worried about following rules that they forget to pay attention to the way the words sound when spoken. Commas help a reader understand the rhythm of the sentence. If you are having comma problems, try saying your sentence out loud, and listening for natural pauses. The function of a comma is to slow the reader down briefly and make the reader pause. The omission of a comma can allow phrases and clauses to crash into one another, thereby confusing the reader.

Commas can influence the meaning of your sentence. Consider the following:

The food tastes terrible, however the cook fixes it. The food tastes terrible, however, the cook fixes it.

In the first sentence, the food tastes terrible no matter how the cook fixes it. In the second sentence, the cook improves the taste of the food. Again, the comma controls the meaning.

RULES FOR COMMAS

1. Use a comma to separate two independent clauses connected by and, but, or, nor, for.

Bob was usually a quiet man, but he screamed upon entering the room.

The strange man lying under the table appeared to be dead, or just possibly he was only napping.

If the independent clauses are short, you may omit the comma.

The man was still and his foot was bleeding.

His hat was on but his pants were off.

2. Use a comma to separate elements in a list or series. Don't omit the final comma.

Bob tried to breathe, to keep from fainting, and to remember his first aid.

Next to the man was a bassoon, a water balloon, and a raccoon.

3. Use a comma to separate introductory phrases and clauses from the independent clause, particularly if the phrase or clause is long.

After catching his breath, Bob squatted next to the man and took his pulse.

When he felt nothing, Bob picked up the bassoon and blew.

Although he had never played a bassoon before, he somehow managed to make beautiful music.

Again, if the introductory phrase is short, you may omit the comma:

When he stopped playing it was dark outside.

4. If the introductory phrase is a gerund, participial, or infinitive phrase, use a comma even if the phrase is short. Otherwise the reader may be confused:

When Bob began to eat, rats ran across the carpet.

Not: When Bob began to eat rats ran across the carpet.

5. In a series of adjectives, use a comma if the adjectives could also be separated by and.

The nimble, fat, and furry raccoon began to poke at the water balloon.

(Could write as: The nimble and fat and furry raccoon . . .)

If the and doesn't fit, leave out the comma:

The man's white cotton shirt was balled up in a corner.

(Wouldn't write as: The man's white and cotton shirt . . .)

If this rule seems confusing, try reading the sentence aloud. If you make a slight pause between adjectives, put in commas. Otherwise, leave them out. Another test: if you can change the order of the adjectives, put in commas.- For example:

The handsome, brilliant scholar

Or: The brilliant, handsome scholar

The frilly party dress

Not: The party frilly dress

6. Use commas to set off clauses but do not use commas for restrictive clauses. (Quick review: and essential or restrictive clause is one that can't be left out of a sentence. Clauses that don't define can be lifted from the sentence without changing the meaning.)

Bananas that are green taste tart.

(That are green defines which bananas we mean)

Bananas, which grow in the tropics, do not need refrigeration.

(Which grow in the tropics refers to all bananas. The clause can be lifted from the sentence without changing the meaning.)

Let's look at a sentence that you could punctuate either way, depending on the meaning:

The men who were tired and hungry began eating sardines.

(who were tired and hungry is a defining clause, telling us which men we mean)

The men, who were tired and hungry, began eating sardines.

(Who were tired and hungry describes all of the men and doesn't differentiate these men from other men who weren't tired and hungry.)

7. Words or phrases that interrupt the sentence should be set off by commas.

Now then, let's get down to work.

"Save me," he said, before falling down the stairs.

On the other hand, error can lead to revelation.

What the candidate promised, in fact, is impossible to achieve.

Hello, I must be going.

8. Use commas to set off an appositive. An appositive is a noun or pronoun that explains or identifies the noun that precedes it.

Mrs. Dingdong, my favorite teacher, is wearing a wig.

Ralphie, the president of the student council, is on probation.

Remember that commas are one way to make your writing clear. Reading your sentences aloud is a very good way to find the natural place for commas, as is inspecting your sentences for ambiguity or confusion.

5b9. Semi-colons

RULES FOR SEMICOLONS

1. Use a semicolon to link two independent clauses.

To give a good party, you must consider the lighting; no one feels comfortable under the bright glare of fluorescent lights.

Note that the two clauses are connected in thought. Also-and this is the thing to understand about semicolons-you could use a comma and a conjunction in place of the semicolon.

To give a good party, you must consider the lighting, since no one feels comfortable under the bright glare of fluorescent lights.

2. Use a semicolon to separate elements in a list if the elements are long - or if the elements themselves have commas in them.

To get completely ready for your party, you should clean your house; make sure your old, decrepit stereo works; prepare a lot of delicious, strange food; and expect odd, antisocial, and frivolous behavior on the part of your guests.

3. Semicolons belong outside quotation marks.

One man at the party sat in a corner and read "The Adventures of Bob"; he may have been shy, or he may have found "The Adventures of Bob" too exciting to put down.

5b10. Colons

RULES FOR COLONS

1. Use a colon when making a list.

There are four ingredients necessary to a good party:
music, lighting, food, and personality.

5b(11). Using Hyphens Correctly

A. Use the hyphen with the compound numbers twenty-one through ninety-nine, and with fractions used as adjectives.

CORRECT: Sixty-five students constituted a majority.

CORRECT: A two-thirds vote was necessary to carry the measure.

B. Use the hyphen with the prefixes ex, all, and self and with the suffix elect.

CORRECT: The constitution protects against self-incrimination.

CORRECT: The president-elect was invited to chair the meeting.

C. Use the hyphen with a compound adjective when it comes before the word it modifies, but not when it comes after the word it modifies.

CORRECT:

The no-holds-barred argument continued into the night. The argument continued with no holds barred.

D. Use the hyphen with any prefix used before a proper noun or adjective.

CORRECT: His pro-African sentiments were heartily applauded.

CORRECT: They believed that his activities were un-American.

E. Use the dash to indicate an abrupt change of thought. In general, however, formal writing is

best when you think out what you want to say in advance and avoid abrupt changes of thought.

CORRECT: The inheritance must cover the entire cost of the proposal-Gail has no other money to invest

5b12. The Apostrophe

The apostrophe is used to show ownership. Most of the time, it presents no confusion: Bob's bassoon, the woman's finger. The tricky part is using an apostrophe when the owner is plural.

RULES FOR APOSTROPHES

1. if the plural noun doesn't end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s. (This is the easy part.)

the women's fingers

the bacteria's growth

the mice's hairballs

2. If the plural ends in -s, just add an apostrophe.

the babies' bottoms the horses'

hooves the politicians' promises

3. If the word is a proper noun that ends in -s, add an apostrophe and an -s. (This is the part people get wrong.)

Yeats's poem

Ross's riddle

Chris's crisis

Chapter 6: The Real Essay Questions

How to see all the real AWA questions beforehand

To beat the competition, you need to do some brainstorming for all 280 AWA questions so that you are ready for any of them.

1. The questions are in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf format). If you do not have Adobe Acrobat you can download it for free [click here to download](#).
2. Then, download the 280 questions.
3. After you have downloaded the Acrobat file, print out the 140 Issue questions and the 140 Argument questions.
4. Number the questions from 1-10 for Analysis of Argument and 1-10 for the Analysis of Issue. (The Analysis of Issue essays start after the 140 Analysis of Argument questions. This Issue questions start approximately on page 22 of the print out.) We have the answers to those questions here for the first ten essays for both categories.
6. Skim through all of the essay questions. Take quick notes on each of the questions (you will see two of them on test day). Then go back and read each one again. Pause for a minute to ponder the

topic. At least three or four ideas will probably pop into your mind; jot them down. At this point, don't try to organize your thoughts or commit to a position on the issues.

Comments:

- There is no one "correct" response to any AWA question.
- These essays were written in 30-45 minute periods. They represent 5-6 score essays.
- We cannot post the actual question. Instead we have used a brief identifying phrase for each question.

Answers to the Real Essay Questions

Analysis of Argument

#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #7 #8 #9 #10

These essays are not "perfect" answers, but represent what could be done in a 30 minute time period to get a score of 5 or 6.

Analysis of Argument # 1: Olympia Foods

The author argues, using facts from the color-film processing industry's downward trend in cost over 24 years, that Olympic Foods will be able to cut costs and thus maximize profits in the future. The author bases his conclusion on the generalization that organizations learn to reduce costs over time and, since Olympic Foods has 25 years experience in the food processing industry, its costs should have declined considerably. There are two serious flaws in the argument.

First, the argument uses a faulty analogy between the color-film processing industry and the food processing industry. Analogies drawn between the two fields are highly suspect because there are many serious differences. While the film processing industry faces a relatively simply processing challenge, food producers must contend with contamination, transportation and farm production (much more serious challenges). Thus, it is likely much more difficult to wring efficiency improvements in the food industry.

Second, the author uses a sweeping generalization. the author's prediction of margin improvements relies on the optimistic assumption that Olympic Foods' 25 years of experience will automatically result in operational efficiencies. The problem with this is that improvements in processes do not occur automatically over time, they require tremendous effort at continuous improvement and they require potential room for improvement. It is possible Olympic Food has limited room for improvement or lacks the managerial will to improve its operations. Thus, there is no guarantee of improved operational efficiency over time.

The author's argument has two seriously flawed assumptions. The author could strengthen his conclusion by providing examples of how the company has learned how to improve its operations over 25 years and implemented those changes.

Analysis of Argument # 2: Centralization of Sales

The argument concludes that the Apogee Company should shut down its field offices and

use a centralized location because the company was more profitable when it had a single central location. The argument has two serious flaws.

First, the author commits the "After This, Therefore, Because of This" fallacy where the author assumes that because a decline in profitability occurred after the field offices were created, the field offices were responsible for the decline. However, there may be other factors that could have caused the decline. Could a industry-wide decline, poor management, or poor marketing have caused the decline? There are many factors that could have caused or contributed to the decline. Without ruling out other factors or presenting stronger evidence, the author cannot conclusively blame the field offices.

Second, the author assumes that eliminating the field offices would improve profitability by streamlining the management of employees and cutting costs. There is no evidence to support this assumption. Perhaps the field offices cut travel costs from the central office and allowed better management of sales to far-flung clients. The author could support his assumption with cost-cutting and or profit-enhancing strategies.

In summary, to strengthen the conclusion that Apogee should close field offices and centralize, this author must rule out factors other than decentralization that might be affecting current profits negatively and demonstrate how decentralization would cut costs.

Analysis of Argument # 3 : Funding of Arts

The author concludes in this argument that the city should shift some of its arts funding to public television for two reasons. The author argues that public television is being threatened by severe cuts in corporate funding and attendance at the city's art museum has increased proportionately with increases in visual-arts program viewing on public television. There are a few problems with this argument.

First, the argument assumes that a correlation proves causality. Simply because there was an increase in television exposure to the visual arts, mainly public television, has caused a similar increase in local art museum attendance. The author uses the statistical relationship between increased art museum attendance and similar increases in television viewing of visual arts programs to establish causality. However, a statistical correlation does not mean causality, there may be other factors driving the increased art museum attendance, such as new shows, a new wing added to the museum, or possibly interest in art has risen overall in society.

On the other hand, the author makes a fair assumption that television programs impact behavior. This is a common sense assumption, after all, advertisers spend billions of dollars on television ad time because they trust this assumption as well.

In conclusion, the author's reasoning is somewhat persuasive. The author could strengthen his argument by eliminating other potential causes to increase in visits to the local art museum.

Analysis of Argument # 4: Declining Revenues and Delays

The report recommends replacing the manager of the purchasing department in response to a relationship between falling revenues and delays in manufacturing. The grounds for this action are that the delays are traced to poor planning in purchasing metals and cause of the poor planning might be the purchasing manager's lack of knowledge of the properties of metals. The author

suggests that the position of purchasing manager should be filled by a scientist from the research division and that the current purchasing manager should be reassigned to the sales department. The report supports this latter recommendation pointing out that the purchasing manager's background in general business, psychology, and sociology equip him for this new assignment. The report's recommendations have two serious questionable assumptions.

The first problem is that the report fails to establish a causal connection between the falling revenues of the company and the delays in manufacturing. The fact that falling revenues coincide with delays in manufacturing does not necessarily prove that the delays caused the decline in revenue. The report's recommendations are not worthy of consideration if there is no compelling evidence to support the causal connection between these two events.

Second, the report assumes that knowledge of the properties of metals is necessary for planning in purchasing metals. No evidence is stated in the report to support this crucial assumption. Moreover, it is not obvious that such knowledge would be required to perform this task because planning is essentially a logistical function.

The author could strengthen argument that the manager of the purchasing department be replaced by demonstrating that the falling revenues were a result of the delays in manufacturing. Additionally, the author would have to show that knowledge of the properties of metals would improve planning the purchasing of metals.

Analysis of Argument # 5: Increasing Circulation

The publisher of the Mercury newspaper is suggesting that its price be reduced below the price of The Bugle, a competing newspaper. The circulation of the Mercury has declined during the 5-year period following The Bugle's introduction. The publisher believes that lowering the price of The Mercury will increase its readership, thereby increasing profits because a wider readership attracts more advertisers. The publisher's reasoning has two serious problems.

First, although it is obvious that increased circulation would make the paper more attractive to potential advertisers, it is not clear that lowering the subscription price is the most effective way to gain new readers. The publisher assumes that price is the only factor that caused the decline in readership. There is no evidence given to support this claim. In addition, given that The Mercury was the established local paper, it is doubtful that the large-scale subscription dropping of its readers would be explained by subscription price alone.

It is possible that there are other reasons for The Mercury's decline in readership. The Bugle could have much better writing and layout than the Mercury. Or, readers may not be satisfied with the news reporting's accuracy, or the balance of local to national/statewide news coverage. Either way, it is unclear that lowering prices will drive up readership.

In conclusion, this argument depends on a simplified assumption about the price of the paper and its popularity. The author could strengthen the argument by discussing other factors beyond cost before concluding that lowering subscription prices will increase circulation and, thereby, increase advertising revenues.

Analysis of Argument # 6: City of Helios

This advertisement for the city of Helios makes several arguments for locating companies in

Helios. The advertisement states that Helios is an industrial center and enjoys a lower than average unemployment rate. In addition, the advertisement states that the city is "attempting" to expand its base by attracting companies that focus on technologies. This argument is problematic for three reasons. Moreover, it is argued, efforts are currently underway to expand the economic base of the city by attracting companies that focus on research and development of innovative technologies. This argument is problematic for several reasons.

First, the argument presents no reason to believe that the city is equipped to handle non-manufacturing related businesses. The status of the city as a manufacturing center will likely mean that it is equipped to handle manufacturing businesses. Its labor supply, energy resources, regulatory environment, support businesses, and infrastructure are likely well suited to manufacturing companies. However, there is no reason to believe, based on the argument that Helios offers any attractive benefits to technology companies.

In addition, since the city lacks any specific benefit to technology companies, the use of the statement "Helios is attempting its economic base" is a non sequitur in the context of the overall argument. The statement offers no benefit to technology companies to move there other than an expressed interest in attracting those companies. This argument could be strengthened if they actually provided real benefits to technology companies.

Another ineffective argument made is the city's low employment rate. The low unemployment rate during a recession suggests that the city has a labor shortage. This means that companies moving to the city will have to probably pay above average labor rates to attract labor in a tight market.

The advertisement for the city of Helios fails to provide any compelling reason for non-manufacturing businesses in Helios. The low unemployment rate actually suggests that the city is a poor place to locate a business. Based on the advertisement, the only companies that could plausibly benefit from the city are manufacturing companies.

Analysis of Argument # 7: Aspartame or Sugar

The author in this argument is trying to establish that people are better off trying to lose weight with sugar rather than the artificial sweetener aspartame. This conclusion is based on the assertion that aspartame can indirectly cause weight gain by triggering food cravings, while sugar benefits weight loss by enhancing the body's ability to burn fat actually enhances the body's ability to burn fat. The details of the claim however, prevent making an effective generalization about Aspartame's weight-loss benefits.

The argument states that "high" dosages are required to deplete the brain chemicals responsible for registering a sense of being sated, or full. The problem is that a "high" dosage is not defined. Is this high dosage reached during normal consumption? Without the dosage defined, it is impossible to determine how often or how significant of a side effect the food craving is.

The second statement, that sugar burns fat, also is qualified and not universally applicable. In this instance, the benefits of sugar only arise after at least 45 minutes of continuous exercise. However, it is a fair assumption that many exercisers will not actually exercise for 45 minutes. Thus, the author cannot make the generalization that all exercisers should prefer Aspartame over sugar after exercise.

In conclusion, each of the studies cited in the argument cannot be extended to make a generalization that Aspartame is preferable to sugar. Instead, the exercise claim must be qualified by "after 45 minutes" and the dosage indicated by "high" must be defined.

Analysis of Argument # 8: Worker interest

This argument uses a survey of workers to show that workers are indeed interested in management issues. The argument is solely based on a survey of 1200 workers that showed that 79% of the workers surveyed expressed interest in the topics of corporate restructuring and the redesign of worker benefits. This argument has several flaws.

The first objection to this argument is the validity of the survey. The statement is incomplete because it does not adequately describe the conditions of the survey. One issue is the sample. Were the workers chosen for the survey chosen randomly or did they volunteer for the survey? This question is relevant here since apathetic workers would obviously not respond to a survey of worker apathy!

In addition, are the 1200 people used in the survey representative of the company's employees and an adequate sample size. Perhaps the 1200 workers are part of a major company with several hundred thousand employees. Or, the workers surveyed may not be representative of the company at large. For example, what if they were part of a management trainee program for workers who wanted to move into management positions?

Aside from any issues relating to the quality of the survey, the argument makes a false generalization about the results of the survey. The survey asks specifically about the worker's interest in corporate restructuring and redesign of benefits programs. These issues could be reasonably construed as worker's issues since they would directly impact worker benefits and job security (restructuring often implies layoffs). Thus, the survey cannot be extended to demonstrate an interest in management issues.

In sum, the conclusion about worker interest in management issues cannot be reasonably drawn from the survey's information. The survey's accuracy is not adequately explained and the survey's results are illogically extended to draw an unsupported generalization.

Analysis of Argument # 9: Consumer demographics

The author argues that department store sales will increase significantly over the next few years because their core market of middle aged people will increase in size over the next decade. The author uses the statistic that 39 percent of the retail expenditures of middle-aged people are through department stores. The author additionally argues that stores should take advantage of this trend by carrying more products aimed at middle-aged customers. This argument has two serious flaws.

The argument falsely assumes that an increase in middle-aged people will automatically translate into an increase in sales. The argument errs because it does not acknowledge that the younger generation consists of a different population cohort, which may not favor department stores. Indeed, this generation may favor stores such as the GAP, that became prominent in the 1980's. Thus, the younger generation's preference for non-department store retailers may be a generational phenomenon rather than an age-related issue.

The argument further suggests that department store's inventories should be changed to reflect the tastes of middle-aged Americans. This is problematic because the younger population, although preferring non-department stores, may be growing at a faster rate than the middle-aged Americans and therefore represents a more attractive market. In addition, it is possible, as stated in the prior paragraph, that the younger generation's tastes have indeed changed and that when they age they will not shop at department stores.

In sum, this argument is not strong as it currently stands. The argument needs more information about the growth rates of the younger market and their tastes.

Analysis of Argument # 10: Funding cuts

The argument states that the state legislature does not have to consider the views of protesting students. The author supports this conclusion by pointing out that only 200 of the 12,000 students actually went to the state capitol to protest the cuts in college programs. The author concludes that since an overwhelming majority of the students did not take part in the survey, they must not be interested in the issue. This argument has two serious flaws.

The author attempts to make a statistical inference from the fact that only 200 out of 12,000 showed up for the rally. This is not a valid statistical survey. If, for example, the students had been randomly surveyed to get a fair sample of the overall population, this would have been a valid survey.

Second, the author uses the fact 12,000 students stayed on campus or left for winter break to show that they were not concerned about education cuts. In fact, if the protest was during winter break, it suggests a large level of inconvenience for the students to protest the cuts (since many could return home to distant locations). A low turnout does not suggest a low level of interest, but instead implies a high level of organizational opposition since students could be recruited during their vacation time.

As it stands the argument is not well reasoned. To make it logically acceptable, the author would have to demonstrate that the protesting students had some characteristic in common that biases their views, thereby nullifying their protest as representative of the entire college.

Analysis of Issue

#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #7 #8 #9 #10

These essays are not "perfect" answers, but represent what could be done in a 30 minute time period to get a score of 5 or 6.

Issue #1: Radio and TV Censorship

The censorship and regulation of broadcast media for offensive material involves a conflict between the freedom of expression and the duty of government to protect its citizenry from potential harm. I believe that our societal interest in preventing the harm that exposure to obscenity produces takes precedence over the freedoms of individual broadcasters.

Firstly, I believe exposure to obscene and offensive language and behavior causes people to mimic such behavior. There is anecdotal and scientific evidence to support this contention.

Secondly, I believe that obscene and offensive behavior is damaging to a society. It weakens moral character and weakens human relationships and it promotes a tendency toward immoral and antisocial behavior. These effects weaken the civil cords that hold a democratic society together.

Some argue for that free speech is the basis of a democratic society. However, the founding fathers never intended the constitution to mean an unrestricted license to wanton profanity. Advocates of free expression might also point out difficulties in defining "obscene" or "offensive" language or behavior. But, however difficult it may be to agree on standards, the effort is beneficial insofar as it helps to maintain the civil cords of a democratic society.

In conclusion, government should take a role in regulating speech, but only speech that is patently offensive. Regulation of media may infringe on freedom of speech, but it is worthwhile if it can restrict the exposure of damaging offensive material.

Issue #2: Energy Sources and International Effort

The statement argues that international leadership is necessary to conserve energy for the future. The passage makes the reasonable assumption that individual nations will not unilaterally cut their energy usage, and that international cooperation is necessary to conserve resources. However, the sub text of the argument, that resources are diminishing and that international regulation is the only way to protect resource availability may not be valid. This calls into question the legitimacy of the statement.

It is reasonable to expect that many individual nations will act in a rational (self-interested) manner. Some nations, such as the U.S and the E.U. may cooperate to reduce resource depletion, but rogue nations such as the P.R.C. and North Korea will likely not comply with cuts on a volunteer basis. Thus, an international organization would indeed be necessary to apply sanctions and compel compliance. In this respect, I agree with the argument.

However, the argument is too vague and fails to define (1) what resources are approaching depletion and (2) if regulation restricting usage is the most effective means of conservation. Oil reserves, for example, have been increasing, not decreasing, over time because of improved technology used in drilling has allowed greater access. In addition, if technology can improve access to resources, provide access to renewable resources (such as solar power), and improve conservation (energy efficiency), then regulations that could impede technological advancement could exacerbate the situation. Thus, an international regulatory regime may not be effective at maintaining adequate resource supplies.

In sum, it is likely true that an international regulatory regime would be required to regulate global resource consumption. However, it is unclear that such a regime would be necessary or effective to maintain adequate resource supplies globally.

Issue #3: Flat or Pyramid Organization

The author tries to argue that corporations should use a "flat" structure and eliminate salary grades. This, according to the author, would benefit worker morale and encourage camaraderie. I disagree with the author because it is likely that such a corporate structure would diminish corporate profits and potentially decrease worker morale.

The principal flaw with such a structure is that it fails to incentivize workers and reward

them for their own performance. Without individual merit, workers have no self-interest in their own performance and results. In a dynamic business environment, workers must be able to take initiative and effect change. In a flat organizational structure, such behavior would be indirectly discouraged because the risk-taking necessary to catalyze change would not be rewarded. Thus, companies with such a structure would likely have less motivated and entrepreneurial employees.

The speaker also assumes that such a flat structure would increase camaraderie. While it is true that such a structure may reduce envy among employees by reducing inequality, it is not clear that such a structure is conducive to decisive leadership. In a organization where all are equals, there are no leaders. Without leaders, there are no arbiters in times of disagreement or leaders in times of change. Thus, the flat organizational structure may devolve into an anarchistic one.

In sum, the opinion that a "flat" organizational structure conducive to collegiality and cooperation is likely inaccurate. Such a structure would probably reduce profitability and create a chaotic work environment that lacked a decisive decision-making capability.

Issue #4: Power

This quote states that people admire those who show restraint in exercising power. Rather than a sweeping statement, this statement is sometimes true and sometimes not. The statement's truth depends on the context of popular opinion at the time.

The most famous example of a man relinquishing power at the height of his power is George Washington. During his presidency he could use his fame to take absolute control of the early United States. But unlike Caesar, George Washington did not destroy the republic to become dictator. Instead, he refused much of the power that was being offered to him. This was one of the few times in human history that a man did this (Napoleon certainly did not) and it set a precedent of governmental restraint that continues to this day in the United States. At the time, people around the world were awestruck and the poet Lord Byron romanticized Washington as the "Cincinnatus of the West."

However, another great man, Winston Churchill, lost political power for his restraint. In 1946, Winston Churchill, the brilliant war leader during World War II, lost an election for Prime Minister to his socialist opponents who argued for the nationalization of industries. Churchill could have certainly used his prestige to nationalize industries or offer a host of entitlements to Britain's citizens, but instead he refused to exercise power in such a way and ended up losing an election to a candidate who argued for much greater use of governmental intervention in the economy.

In conclusion, showing restraint in exercising political power is often admirable and romanticized. However, for a politician it may be a dangerous and risky move that could endanger their power. In some circumstances it is appropriate, but often politicians must exercise all the power they have at their disposal in order to retain power.

Issue 5: Decision-Making in an Organization

This author argues that responsibilities should be collective and that individuals are not effective at getting things done. I agree that in certain circumstances a team approach is more effective, but in other instances the flexibility, creativity and accountability of individuals is more

effective. Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses.

Complex tasks that require a variety of skills and viewpoints are generally better done by teams. For example, if a project required skills in marketing, computer programming and finance, it is unlikely that a single individual could execute the project effectively. For those projects a team would be highly effective.

On the other hand, tasks that require high degrees of creativity, quick response time and intuition while also requiring tight accountability, should be done by individuals. A good example is stock trading. Traders need to act quickly and decisively to changing market conditions. Often, there is no time to call a meeting and come to a group conclusion about what to do. In addition, by having the responsibility handled by a single individual, there is a high degree of accountability since that single individual is completely responsible for his actions.

In conclusion, the statement makes an inaccurate generalization. Certain circumstances favor teamwork while others favor individual action depending on the responsibilities and duties the position requires.

Issue #6: The definition of success

The author of this statement defines success by the ability to "spend life in your own way." It is freedom to act and the ability to choose your own destiny free from direct accountability. This is highly attractive lifestyle to many people and makes a reasonable definition of success. However, it seems that freedom alone is not an indicator of success.

When we think of individuals who spend life in their own way we think of great people who have earned independence and freedom through their successes. A good example is Jim Clark, who founded Silicon Graphics, Netscape and Healthon. He is arguably the most successful entrepreneur in history and is in complete control of his life and destiny. He has the ability to create new ventures from nothing and create companies with billion-dollar capitalizations. His life, by this definition, has been a remarkable success.

However, extending the Jim Clark example reveals problems with this definition. He has had many difficulties in his personal life, and in this respect his life has not been a success. Success is often a function of our effectiveness working within a structure, whether that be a marriage or an organization.

In addition, individuals may acquire high degrees of freedom without any accomplishments of their own merit. Many people inherit money or come into freedom through no merit of their own. Thus, freedom itself may not be an accurate indicator of success.

Perhaps the author's original statement could be qualified. Being able to "spend life in your own way" is not necessarily a definition of success, but a benefit that success often entails.

Issue # 7: Giving advice to other people

Is the best way to advise people to simply find out what it is they want and help them attain it? This is a sound policy to helping people and should always be the concern when offering assistance. Make sure that you are indeed helping the person rather than your misconception of what that person wants. This approach is usually valid unless the person does not know what is best for himself.

The main problem with giving advice to other people is that you may confuse what is good for yourself and apply it to that individual. The person you are trying to help, however, may be in a situation you do not understand. The best way to help that person is to first find out what that person wants.

However, the author's suggestion will often not apply to circumstances where the person being given advice is in no position to judge what he or she wants. For example, an adult should not always advise a child about how to get what he wants. In these situations, the best advice is obviously not to find out what they want and help them attain it, but to instead advise them on what is best for them.

In conclusion, giving advice to people should depend on the person you are trying to help. If the person is capable of determining what is in his best interests, then advice should be given to help them. Otherwise, you should be careful advising someone about what they want.

Issue # 8: Monetary System

This is an interesting concept for changing the world's monetary system of metal coins and printed paper into a computerized system of credits and debits. However, this system is already largely implemented. The final step would be to create digital cash cards.

Much of the world's wealth is already tracked digitally. Every day trillions of dollars are shifted digitally around the world. This argument is somewhat confused insofar as it poses its argument as if wealth and monetary transactions have not already been digitized.

The last step in implementing digital monetary transactions are smart cards that contain a chip that links to an account. This would act as a credit card for small transactions. This would provide a wonderful convenience and from a symbolic point, it would ultimately mean that cash would be unnecessary.

However, I believe that technology should never be implemented for technology's sake. Old-fashioned cash and coins have great convenient value. If I want to pay my nephew to mow my lawn, I can't pay him in a digital manner. Can I tip a coat check girl with a digital card. Indeed, under close inspection it becomes apparent that coins and money have been around thousands of years and should remain for thousands more.

Changing all money to a digital format is inconvenient and represents technology for technology's sake. Cash and coins are highly convenient and do not need to be replaced by an inconvenient and impractical solution.

Issue #9: Personal Lives of Employees

Should employees leave their personal lives entirely behind them when they enter the workplace, as the author suggests here? While it is true that employees should not allow their personal lives to interfere with their jobs, the author fails to consider that personal issues can help to foster a workplace atmosphere that helps everyone do a better job.

Bringing in personal interests and activities can help build collegiality among workers. Discussing personal activities helps to establish a rapport with co-workers. Company-sponsored social activities help to produce greater cohesiveness in an organization, by allowing relationships

to develop among workers.

However, employees be aware that personal lives could intrude on job performance. At worst, personal lives could become a distraction to work performance. Romantic relationships between coworkers could create sexual harassment liability and also need to be kept confidential. Another problem with interjecting personal lives into work is that employees who do not share their personal lives could be viewed as aloof and may be resented by coworkers who perceive them as arrogant, unfriendly or uncooperative. Thus, interjecting personal lives into work presents risks.

In the final analysis, employees should strike a careful balance when they mix their personal lives with their jobs. Although there are some circumstances in which bringing one's personal life to the job may be counterproductive, for many reasons it is a good idea to inject small doses of personal life into the workplace.

Issue # 10: Process vs. Product

The passage states that "in an enterprise the process of doing something is more important than the final product itself." I wholeheartedly agree with this statement, the process of doing something, if handled properly will insure the final product, in this way, the process is what makes the final product.

The quality of the process will insure the quality of the results. For example, if a company is processing its tax returns, then it must assure the legitimacy of the processes of calculating those results. Were qualified accountants used? Were they given the proper accounting process? What is important is not the final return but the process that leads to the final tax calculation.

In addition, in research the process is often more valuable than the final results. For example, at Bell Labs in the 1940s several scientists were trying to develop transistor technology that could be demonstrable. Instead, while developing the transistor the scientists stumbled upon a design that laid the groundwork for the microchip. The process of research led to a radical new design that was highly cost effective.

Finally, there is an ennobling element to the process associated with any great accomplishment, whether it be winning World War II, building the Hoover Dam, or the Wright brothers development of motorized flight, in each case the value of an accomplishment becomes especially sweet in light of the sacrifices required to make it. When we collectively reflect on these accomplishments, we cannot help dwell on the courage required in the processes to make the final accomplishment.

In conclusion, the process of doing something often is more critical and important than the final product. It is the effort and brilliance in the process that itself produces the result.

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