

General Knowledge and Logical Reasoning

Section 1 will assess general knowledge and the thinking skills that students must possess in order to succeed in a course of study at the highest level. Such skills are basic to any academic studies, which often require students to solve novel problems, or consider arguments put forward to justify a conclusion, or to promote or defend a particular point of view.

General Knowledge

General Knowledge questions may address a range of cultural topics, including aspects of literary, historical, philosophical, social and political culture.

These questions are not based on any specific part of school curricula; rather their aim is to test the candidates' interest and knowledge in a wide variety of fields. Candidates with a keen extra-curricular interest in current events who regularly keep up to date with national and international news will be better prepared to answer this type of question.

Which country was governed by the Taliban's theocratic regime from 1996 to 2001?

- A Afghanistan
- B Iran
- C Iraq
- D Saudi Arabia
- E Syria

Here the correct answer is **A**.

Logical Reasoning

The questions in this section evaluate candidates' thinking skills, reasoning skills and analytical skills, especially the ability to follow the logical steps in different contexts, to recognize fallacies in the argument, to solve problems, and to discern relevant from irrelevant information.

More specifically, there are two types of logical reasoning questions:

- **Critical thinking:** questions that involve reasoning using everyday written language. Questions focus on the skills involved in understanding and evaluating arguments.
- **Problem Solving:** questions that involve reasoning using numerical and spatial skills.

In order to successfully answer these questions, candidates must employ a logical approach. No previous knowledge of any particular subject is necessary and all the information required to answer them is included in the question. Candidates are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the different types of questions by reading this guide.

Critical Thinking

In this category there are 7 different specific types of questions that can appear in this section of the test:

1. Summarizing the main conclusion
2. Drawing a conclusion
3. Identifying an assumption
4. Assessing the impact of additional evidence
5. Detecting reasoning errors
6. Identifying parallel reasoning
7. Applying principles

1. Summarizing the Main Conclusion

There has been a decline in the rate of many of the illnesses of old age. The causes of this decline include such medical advances as new drugs and surgical techniques. There is, however, another factor. The present generation of 60- and 70-year-olds had much better nutrition as children than did their parents. Good nutrition in childhood is important for good health in adulthood. Since improvements in nutrition have continued over the past sixty years, we can expect that many of the illnesses of old age will continue to decline.

Which one of the following best expresses the main conclusion of the above argument?

- A** We can expect that improvements in nutrition will continue.
- B** The rate of many of the illnesses of old age has declined.
- C** Medical advances have significantly reduced the rate of diseases of old age.
- D** The fall in the rate of many of the illnesses associated with old age will continue.
- E** Improvements in nutrition have been very important in maintaining good health in old age.

In this type of question you have to judge which one of the statements A to E best expresses the main conclusion of the argument. The conclusion can appear anywhere within an argument - not necessarily at the end. What you are looking for is the statement which follows from, or is supported by the rest of the passage.

In this case, **D** is the correct answer.

2. Drawing a Conclusion

The demand for blood donors is increasing all over the world. In Western countries, in particular, demand has been rising so rapidly that shortages have begun to appear. In all such countries, demand is growing much faster than rates of growth in populations aged 18–65, and it is this group who are the major blood donors. And, despite a massive research effort to find alternatives, it remains true that in medicine there is no substitute for human blood.

Which one of the following conclusions can be drawn from the passage?

- A** As the demand for blood has increased, so has the supply fallen.
- B** The rate of growth of the blood-donor population has been slowing recently.
- C** The increase in the rate of demand for blood is mainly due to population growth.
- D** If more blood donors could be found, there would be no need to find a substitute for human blood.
- E** The problem of the increase in demand for blood shows no sign of disappearing.

In this type of question you are asked which conclusion follows from the information given. You need to consider each of the statements A to E, and to think about whether the information in the passage gives you good reasons to accept the statement.

In this case, **E** is the correct answer.

3. Identifying an Assumption

Success in modern America is very much measured by the quantity of material possessions one has. A lack of material possessions means one is judged to be unsuccessful. Those people with few material possessions therefore must feel a strong sense of failure.

Which one of the following is an underlying assumption of the above argument?

- A** Most modern Americans are successful.
- B** Success can be precisely measured.
- C** People in America with few material possessions want to be seen as successful.
- D** Excessive desire for material possessions is psychologically damaging.
- E** Over-emphasis on material possessions creates social problems.

An assumption is something which is not stated in the argument, but which is taken for granted in order to draw the conclusion. So you need first to identify the conclusion of the argument. Then look for the reasoning it gives to support this conclusion, and think about any important point which is not actually stated in the reasoning.

In this case, **C** is the correct answer.

4. Assessing the Impact of Additional Evidence

Zoos are entirely unsuitable places for animals. People visit zoos to learn about animal behavior but the animals they see are likely to be behaving in abnormal and neurotic ways because of the cramped and unnatural conditions in which they are kept. Zoos should be closed and the money saved should be used for the protection of natural habitats.

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

- A** Humans living in cramped conditions can also become neurotic
- B** Zoos enable endangered species to survive by breeding them in captivity and then re-introducing them to the wild
- C** Many of the animals at present in zoos would not be capable of living in the wild
- D** The protection of natural habitats is very costly
- E** Schoolchildren can learn a great deal about animals from visiting zoos

This type of question will typically ask you to consider what would weaken or strengthen an argument. You need first to be clear about what the argument is trying to establish. Work out what the conclusion is, and then consider what effect each of the possible answers would have on the conclusion.

In this case, **B** is the correct answer.

5. Detecting Reasoning Errors

In order to succeed in academic examinations it is necessary to study. Therefore, if a student works hard in a particular subject, he or she should do well when it comes to the examination.

Which one of the following best describes the flaw in the argument?

- A** It assumes that it is necessary to study in order to succeed.
- B** It overestimates the value of studying in preparation for examinations.
- C** It ignores the fact that some subjects are more academic than others.
- D** It assumes that studying hard is a sufficient condition for academic success.
- E** It ignores the fact that some students do not need to study very much in order to succeed.

This type of question asks you to identify the flaw in the argument, which means that you must explain why the conclusion does not follow from the reasons which are given. So you need to be clear about what the conclusion is, and what reasons are meant to support it.

In this case, **D** is the correct answer.

6. Identifying parallel reasoning

If you want to earn a good salary these days, you have to gain considerable experience of working abroad. Since I have always wanted to earn a huge salary, it's obvious that I'm going to have leave this country for some period of time.

Which one of the following most closely parallels the reasoning used in the above argument?

- A** If I had more time to spend on this project, I know that it would be very successful. I've been told that I'm not going to be given enough time, so the project isn't going to succeed.
- B** Sam knew that if he wanted to write a film script, he would have to learn the special techniques needed for such scripts. He has enrolled on a course to learn how to write them, so he'll soon be writing his first script.
- C** If the Ambassador can bring the two sides together for talks, there's a good chance of peace. Peace is something that both sides want, so he'll be talking to both sides soon.
- D** If the doctor thinks that you should be allowed out of bed for a short while, then you must be recovering well from your operation. You have recovered much quicker than she thought you would, so you'll be out of bed a lot from now on.
- E** Annie says that if she really wants to win the race, she'll have to train very hard every day. She told me that she is determined to win the race, so that means she'll be working hard on her training programme every day from now on.

This type of question asks you to identify similar arguments, but not similarity of topic. You need to look for similarity in the structure or pattern of the argument. So you must identify the structure of the argument and then consider each option to identify an argument with the same structure.

Here the correct answer is **E**.

7. Applying Principles

Smokers who suffer from heart disease which is caused by their smoking should not be allowed to get free health treatment. That is because this is an example of self-inflicted illness. Those whose actions have caused illness or injury to themselves should make a financial contribution to their treatment.

Which one of the following best illustrates the principle underlying the argument above?

- A** Children should get free dental treatment, even if they eat sweets which cause dental decay.
- B** Motor cyclists whose head injuries are caused by not wearing a crash helmet should make a financial contribution to their treatment.
- C** Smokers who cannot afford to pay for healthcare should be allowed free treatment when they are ill.
- D** People who are injured in car accidents should receive free treatment regardless of whether they were wearing a seat belt.
- E** Heart disease sufferers who can afford to pay for health treatment should not receive free treatment.

This type of question asks you to identify which statement illustrates the principle underlying the passage. A principle is a general recommendation, which in the passage will be applied to just one particular case, but which could also be applied to other cases. In order to answer this type of question, you must first identify this principle and then consider each of the options to see which one follows from that principle.

The correct answer is **B**.