GMAT VERBAL REASONING

Reading Comprehension + Critical Reasoning



Contents

How to Use This Book 4

Disclaimer 7

Inside the Verbal Section 8

Reading Comprehension Method 12

Critical Reasoning: Argument Anatomy 19

CR Question Types 24

Timing Strategy 39

Practice Set 44

Method: Answer this from your map, not your memory. The main point covers the whole passage - if your candidate answer only describes paragraph 2, it is too narrow. Eliminate answers that are true of one paragraph but not the whole passage, and answers that use extreme language the author never used.

Trap: the "true but too narrow" answer. It will be a perfectly accurate statement about one paragraph, designed to catch content-readers.

2. Inference

The passage suggests that... It can be inferred that...

Method: An inference must be *directly supported* by the text - a small logical step, not a leap. If the passage says "the policy failed in three of four trial cities," you can infer that it did not fail in every trial city. You cannot infer that it succeeded in the fourth (the result there may have been mixed or inconclusive), and you cannot infer it would fail nationally. The correct inference is usually the most boring, most literal answer.

Trap: answers that go one step too far - plausible in real life, unsupported by the passage.

3. Function

The author mentions X in order to... The reference to Y serves primarily to...

Method: These are pure structure questions. Ask: what job was the author doing at that moment? Was it giving an example of the theory, a counterexample, evidence for a claim, or a concession? Go back and read the two sentences around the reference.

Trap: answers that describe what the detail *says* rather than what it *does*.

4. Detail / Specific Information

According to the passage... The passage states that...

Method: Use your map to locate the right paragraph, then read it precisely. These are lookup questions. The wrong answers usually twist one word - a "most" becomes a "some," a correlation becomes a cause.

Trap: the near-verbatim wrong answer. The test loves to quote the passage almost exactly while flipping one critical word.

> **Callout:** On "EXCEPT" and "NOT" questions (which appear in all four families), flip the task before reading the answers: you are looking for the one choice that does *not* fit. Cross out the four that fit as you verify each against the passage. These questions are slower - budget an extra 30 seconds.

Worked Example: The Passage Map in Action

Read the following passage the way the method teaches - first paragraph carefully, then first-and-last sentences, marking structure words.

Recent scholarship on the adoption of double-entry bookkeeping in Renaissance Italy has challenged the traditional view that the technique spread because it was plainly superior to single-entry methods. Although double-entry systems did offer clearer error detection, historians now note that many successful merchants continued using single-entry records well into the sixteenth century. What drove adoption, a growing body of research suggests, was not efficiency but credibility: double-entry ledgers, with their balanced structure, were more persuasive to distant investors and partners who could not directly observe a merchant's operations. In an era of expanding long-distance trade, the ability to signal trustworthiness mattered more than marginal gains in accuracy. The technique's triumph, then, was less a victory of accounting science than of commercial signaling.

Map:

- Para 1 (only paragraph here): Old view (double-entry spread because superior) challenged; new view: it spread because it signaled credibility to distant investors.

Now the questions:

1. The author's primary purpose is to...

(A) describe the mechanics of double-entry bookkeeping

(B) argue that a new explanation for the spread of double-entry bookkeeping is more convincing than the traditional one

(C) prove that single-entry methods were more efficient

(D) survey Renaissance trade practices

(E) criticize modern accounting standards

From the map: the passage introduces an old view and argues for a new one. (B) matches. (A) is content that never appears. (C) twists the passage - it never says single-entry was more efficient. (D) is too broad. (E) is nowhere in the text.

2. According to the passage, many successful merchants continued using single-entry records because...

Careful - this is a deliberately broken stem, included to train a reflex. The passage never says *why* those merchants continued; it says only that they *did* continue. Any answer choice supplying a reason would be unsupported. A real test question about this sentence would instead ask what the fact *does* in the passage: it serves as evidence against the old

9. (D) The second objection is that the correlations might reflect shared environment (healthier/wealthier families) rather than grandmothering. (D) supplies exactly that confound: families with living grandmothers had better food and medical access *independent* of provisioning - which would produce the survival pattern even if grandmothers did nothing. (A) is about longevity, not confounds. (B) compares the size of the datasets without addressing the confound. (C) concerns which grandmothers lived closer, which says nothing about whether family health or wealth explains the pattern. (E) is irrelevant to the objection.

10. (B) The final sentence says recent work uses natural experiments "to isolate the causal contribution" - i.e., to separate genuine grandmothering effects from confounds like family health and wealth. (B). (A) overstates ("prove" - the passage is careful about causation). (C) reverses the intent. (D) and (E) invent purposes.

11. (C) Necessary assumption. Conclusion: dieters should keep food logs. Premise: log-keepers lose more weight. Gap: is the log the *cause*? The argument needs the difference to come from the log itself rather than from pre-existing differences (log-keepers might be more disciplined generally). Negation test on (C): "The difference is NOT caused by the food log but by other differences between the groups." The recommendation collapses - if disciplined people both keep logs and lose weight, prescribing logs to everyone will not help. Confirmed. (A) and (D) are off-point: enjoyment and comparison with exercise do not affect whether logs work. (B) is far stronger than needed - the argument does not require that every successful dieter keeps a log. (E) is irrelevant: clients' past methods have no bearing on whether the log causes the difference.

12. (E) The mayor's causal claim needs protection against alternatives. If traffic volume fell (fewer cars at night), accidents would fall regardless of lighting. (E) rules out that alternative - traffic was unchanged, so the light change remains the best explanation. (A) and (B) are about cost and approval - irrelevant to causation. (C) actually *weakens*: if accidents fell where lights did not change, something else is at work. (D) is irrelevant.

13. (B) The claim is comparative effectiveness. (B) introduces a classic confound: patients knew they were taking the heavily hyped new drug, so expectation (placebo) effects could explain the higher relief rate. This attacks the inference from the trial result to the superiority claim. (A) is about duration - a limitation, but it does not explain the *difference* between groups. (C), (D), (E) are background facts that do not touch the comparison.

14. (A) Chain the quantifiers: all delivery vans are electric; all electric vehicles in the fleet qualify. Therefore all delivery vans qualify - (A). (B) directly contradicts the chain. (C) is the classic trap: nothing was said about gasoline vans, and "all electric qualify" does not imply "only electric qualify." (D) adds an unsupported claim about the rebate's purpose. (E) is a value judgment with no support.