

Free Critical Thinking Test

Arguments

Solutions Booklet

Instructions

This practice critical thinking test will assess your ability to make inferences and logical assumptions and to reason with supported arguments.

You should attempt the questions **before** reading this solutions document.

You may use this document to check your answers and to read the reasoning behind each question. It is up to you how you practice most effectively, but we suggest you work through the critical thinking test in its entirety before looking at these solutions.

If you believe there are any mistakes in these solutions we would love to be notified so that we can correct them. Please let us know at info@assessmentday.co.uk

Section 1: Arguments

Instructions:

When making important decisions, it is useful to be able to distinguish between a strong argument and a weak argument. A strong argument is both important and directly related to the question. A weak argument is not directly related to the question, or is of minor importance or may be related to a trivial aspect of the question, or confuses correlation with causation (incorrectly assuming that because two things are related, they cause each other to happen).

In this section, a statement is presented to you with an agreeing or disagreeing argument below. You must regard each argument as true, regardless whether it is weak or strong, agrees or disagrees with the statement. The first and second statements will have three arguments each and the third statement will have only two arguments.

If you consider an argument to be strong, select **Strong argument**, or if you consider an argument to be weak, select **Weak argument**. Judge each question and argument individually. Try not to take into account individual opinion or general knowledge since each argument is considered to be true.

See the example questions below with the correct answers given.

Statement One:

Should companies downsize their workforces to decrease expenses and maximise profits?

Q1

Argument One: Yes, downsizing will protect the company from bankruptcy in hard economic times.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: Accepting the argument as true, avoiding bankruptcy is an essential motive for an organisation, however, the statement does not discuss bankruptcy, rather it is discussing profits and expenses. Protection against bankruptcy is not the topic, and is straying from the point, and is, therefore a weak argument.

Q2

Argument Two: Yes, companies have no obligation to employ more people than it can handle.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: Although the point is taken to be true, it does not provide evidence for the benefits of its position, it merely states an irrelevant fact, making this a weak argument.

Q3

Argument Three: No, downsizing leads to demoralisation of the workforce and causes a drop in employee productivity.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong Argument

Explanation: The argument addresses the initial statement directly, providing a clear disadvantage of the statement, making this a strong argument.

Q4

Argument Four: Yes, companies which have no control over the size of their workforce will be highly vulnerable to economic climates and market changes.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: The initial question does not discuss taking away the company's right to control its own size, only one aspect of it. Therefore, the point is arguing a separate question, rather than the initial one, presenting a weak argument.

Statement Two:

Should university-level education be free to all students?

Q5

Argument One: No, too much education can lead to over-qualification, and therefore unemployment.

Strong Argument
Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: The argument only addresses too much education over qualification, and the statement does not discuss these issues, as a result the argument does not fully address the statement, therefore it is a weak argument.

Q6

Argument Two: Yes, having a highly qualified workforce ensures high levels of employee productivity in organisations.

Strong Argument
Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong Argument

Explanation: If the argument is to be taken as true, then this provides a very clear and relevant benefit to free university education, presenting a strong argument.

Q7

Argument Three: No, research has shown that students that are not required to pay tuition fees tend to slack off more and learn less during their degree.

Strong Argument
Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong Argument

Explanation: The argument presents direct evidence for the point put forward, and addresses a serious disadvantage of the initial statement. The statement addresses the initial point directly, and is therefore a strong argument.

Statement Three:

Should employers allow all staff the option of flexi-time working hours?

Q8

Argument One: Yes, giving greater flexibility will improve their work-life balance, and therefore their productivity.

Strong Argument
Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong Argument

Explanation: The argument provides a clear and direct benefit of the initial statement, and directly addresses the statement, making this a strong argument.

Q9

Argument Two: Yes, organisation that value their staff are on average more productive and show lower staff turnover.

Strong Argument
Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: The argument does not specifically address flexi-time; it argues a separate point regarding valuing staff, which is not directly related to the statement, and is therefore a weak argument.

Q10

Argument Three: No, flexi-time leads to employees working fewer hours. Working fewer hours will decrease an employee's exposure to the workplace, making career progression harder and leading to a less experienced workforce.

Strong Argument
Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong Argument

Explanation: The argument provides two relevant arguments for its position, and both offer clear disadvantages which directly relate to the initial statement, making this a strong argument.

Statement Four:

Should governments implement a minimum wage, outlining a minimum amount an employee is to be paid per hour?

Q11

Argument One: Yes, the existence of minimum wages is a key part of a civilised society.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: The argument does not present and advantages of a minimum wage; it only presents a statement about minimum wage, not defending its position, thus making this a weak argument.

Q12

Argument Two: Yes, countries that do not have a minimum wage are often impoverished and dysfunctional.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak Argument

Explanation: The argument does not state that the absence of a minimum wage is the cause of poverty and dysfunction, it just states that these two things coincide, not addressing the point of the argument, and therefore presenting a weak argument.

Q13

Argument Three: No, minimum wage leads to under-employment by forcing companies to take on staff part-time, as they cannot afford to hire them on a full-time basis.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong Argument

Explanation: The argument presents a clear disadvantage of the initial statement, outlining the result and how the result would occur, presenting a strong argument.

Statement Five:

Should banks and financial institutions be obligated to engage in socially-responsible investing?

Q14

Argument One: Yes, engaging in socially responsible investing leads to a happier and more fulfilled workforce compared to banks which do not engage in socially-responsible investing.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong argument

Explanation: The argument addresses the question directly, and offers two clear advantages of the premise described in the statement, directly addressing the question and presenting a strong argument.

Q15

Argument Two: No, banks are for-profit institutions and have no obligation to social issues

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak argument

Explanation: The argument does not provide any benefits of its position or advantageous outcomes; it merely describes its position. This is a weak argument as it does not provide a strong basis for its point, only providing an explanation of its point.

Q16

Argument Three: No, focusing on social responsibility detracts from the aim of making money, which is the most important endeavour for banks, and leads to a decrease in revenue and profit.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong argument

Explanation: The argument presents a clear disadvantage of the premise in the statement, directly addressing the question and providing evidence for its claim. This is, therefore, a strong argument.

Q17

Argument Four: No, over-regulation in the financial sector leads to decreased opportunities and therefore lower profits.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak argument

Explanation: The initial question does not discuss regulation of the financial services sector, so the argument is not addressing the initial point, making it a weak argument.

Statement Six:

Should all members of the European Union join the Eurozone and adopt the euro?

Q18

Argument One: No, countries may find it difficult to adapt to a new currency.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak argument

Explanation: The passage does not provide any evidence for its claim by describing the outcome of its position, and it only states that countries “may” find it difficult, suggesting there is no guarantee, making this a weak argument.

Q19

Argument Two: Yes, the function of the European Union is to form a single currency union.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak argument

Explanation: The argument does not provide evidence for an advantage of a currency union; it merely states the function of the European Union, which does not support its claim. This is, therefore, a weak argument.

Q20

Argument Three: Yes, greater economic unity between countries improves foreign relations between those member countries, which in turn makes each country stronger.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong argument

Explanation: The argument directly answers the question in the initial statement, provides an explanation for its opinion and describes a positive outcome of its premise. This is, therefore, a strong argument.

Q21

Argument Four: No, instability in one Eurozone country could cause the whole Eurozone to become unstable, disrupting the economies of all countries that use the euro.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong argument

Explanation: The argument presents a serious problem with the Eurozone concept, and is directly related to the initial question. The argument explains its point and states the outcome, presenting a strong argument.

Statement Seven:

Should governments be engaging in space exploration research?

Q22

Argument One: No, the money spent on these programs could be used to increase funding for education and healthcare, which would lead to increasing the quality of life for a country's people.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong argument

Explanation: The argument addresses the initial question, provides an explanation of its point and provides the outcome of its stated point. This suggests that this is a strong argument.

Q23

Argument Two: No, countries have collectively spent trillions of dollars on space exploration research already.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak argument

Explanation: This argument does not provide an explanation for why space exploration should not be funded, it simply states that trillions of dollars have already been spent, not explaining its position, making it a weak argument.

Q24

Argument Three: Yes, space exploration has led to numerous discoveries and ushered in the space age.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Weak argument

Explanation: Although the agreement states that discoveries have been made, it does not go into detail about the benefits of those discoveries, and the reference to the space age does not imply a benefit. Therefore, this is a weak argument.

Q25

Argument Four: Yes, the findings of these space exploration research and development programmes have been successfully applied to industry, boosting the economies of the host country.

Strong Argument

Weak Argument

Correct answer: Strong argument

Explanation: The argument directly addresses the initial question, and provides a detailed practical benefit of the initial premise, making this a strong argument.

-- END OF CRITICAL THINKING TEST --