

## Critical Reasoning

Each of the **critical reasoning** questions is based on a short argument, a set of statements, or a plan of action. For each question, select the best answer of the choices given.

18. Vasquez-Morrell Assurance specializes in insuring manufacturers. Whenever a policyholder makes a claim, a claims adjuster determines the amount that Vasquez-Morrell is obligated to pay. Vasquez-Morrell is cutting its staff of claims adjusters by 15 percent. To ensure that the company's ability to handle claims promptly is affected as little as possible by the staff cuts, consultants recommend that Vasquez-Morrell lay off those adjusters who now take longest, on average, to complete work on claims assigned to them.

Which of the following, if true, most seriously calls into question the consultants' criterion for selecting the staff to be laid off?

- (A) If the time that Vasquez-Morrell takes to settle claims increases significantly, it could lose business to other insurers.
- (B) Supervisors at Vasquez-Morrell tend to assign the most complex claims to the most capable adjusters.
- (C) At Vasquez-Morrell, no insurance payments are made until a claims adjuster has reached a final determination on the claim.
- (D) There are no positions at Vasquez-Morrell to which staff currently employed as claims adjusters could be reassigned.
- (E) The premiums that Vasquez-Morrell currently charges are no higher than those charged for similar coverage by competitors.

19. Prolonged spells of hot, dry weather at the end of the grape-growing season typically reduce a vineyard's yield, because the grapes stay relatively small. In years with such weather, wine producers can make only a relatively small quantity of wine from a given area of vineyards. Nonetheless, in regions where wine producers generally grow their own grapes, analysts typically expect a long, hot, dry spell late in the growing season to result in increased revenues for local wine producers.

Which of the following, if true, does most to justify the analysts' expectation?

- (A) The lower a vineyard's yield, the less labor is required to harvest the grapes.
- (B) Long, hot, dry spells at the beginning of the grape-growing season are rare, but they can have a devastating effect on a vineyard's yield.
- (C) Grapes grown for wine production are typically made into wine at or near the vineyard in which they were grown.
- (D) When hot, dry spells are followed by heavy rains, the rains frequently destroy grape crops.
- (E) Grapes that have matured in hot, dry weather make significantly better wine than ordinary grapes.

20. In the past, most children who went sledding in the winter snow in Verland used wooden sleds with runners and steering bars. Ten years ago, smooth plastic sleds became popular; they go faster than wooden sleds but are harder to steer and slow. The concern that plastic sleds are more dangerous is clearly borne out by the fact that the number of children injured while sledding was much higher last winter than it was 10 years ago.

Which of the following, if true in Verland, most seriously undermines the force of the evidence cited?

- (A) A few children still use traditional wooden sleds.
- (B) Very few children wear any kind of protective gear, such as helmets, while sledding.
- (C) Plastic sleds can be used in a much wider variety of snow conditions than wooden sleds can.
- (D) Most sledding injuries occur when a sled collides with a tree, a rock, or another sled.
- (E) Because the traditional wooden sleds can carry more than one rider, an accident involving a wooden sled can result in several children being injured.

21. Metal rings recently excavated from seventh-century settlements in the western part of Mexico were made using the same metallurgical techniques as those used by Ecuadorian artisans before and during that period. These techniques are sufficiently complex to make their independent development in both areas unlikely. Since the people of these two areas were in cultural contact, archaeologists hypothesize that the metallurgical techniques used to make the rings found in Mexico were learned by Mexican artisans from Ecuadorian counterparts.

Which of the following would it be most useful to establish in order to evaluate the archaeologists' hypothesis?

- (A) Whether metal objects were traded from Ecuador to western Mexico during the seventh century
- (B) Whether travel between western Mexico and Ecuador in the seventh century would have been primarily by land or by sea
- (C) Whether artisans from western Mexico could have learned complex metallurgical techniques from their Ecuadorian counterparts without actually leaving western Mexico
- (D) Whether metal tools were used in the seventh-century settlements in western Mexico
- (E) Whether any of the techniques used in the manufacture of the metal rings found in western Mexico are still practiced among artisans in Ecuador today

22. Following several years of declining advertising sales, the *Greenville Times* reorganized its advertising sales force. Before reorganization, the sales force was organized geographically, with some sales representatives concentrating on city-center businesses and others concentrating on different outlying regions. The reorganization attempted to increase the sales representatives' knowledge of clients' businesses by having each sales representative deal with only one type of industry or of retailing. After the reorganization, revenue from advertising sales increased.

In assessing whether the improvement in advertising sales can properly be attributed to the reorganization, it would be most helpful to find out which of the following?

- (A) What proportion of the total revenue of the *Greenville Times* is generated by advertising sales?
- (B) Has the circulation of the *Greenville Times* increased substantially in the last two years?
- (C) Among all the types of industry and retailing that use the *Greenville Times* as an advertising vehicle, which type accounts for the largest proportion of the newspaper's advertising sales?
- (D) Do any clients of the sales representatives of the *Greenville Times* have a standing order with the *Times* for a fixed amount of advertising per month?
- (E) Among the advertisers in the *Greenville Times*, are there more types of retail business or more types of industrial business?