



CRITICAL REASONING · CONCEPT SERIES

The Flaws That Have Names

CRITICAL REASONING

*The named errors of reasoning — and the rule that the flaw you
pick has to be the one the argument actually commits.*

Concept · Worked Examples · 120 Questions

Contents

one chapter, 5 concepts, 25 worked examples and 120 questions — then a back section you will use more than any single chapter. Everything below is on the page the dots point to.

THE ONE CHAPTERS

2. The Flaws That Have Names	3
2.1 Naming the move: the flaw has to be the one the argument commits.....	4
2.2 The circle, the source and the three appeals	10
2.3 Mistaken cause, and the claim that outlives its conditions.....	17
2.4 Part and whole, the shifting term, and the argument that breaks itself.....	23
2.5 What the evidence is worth, and the choice that was never only two	30
2.B Chapter Bank — 25 questions	36

REFERENCE, AND HOW TO USE THE PAPER

How this section is scored — <i>the arithmetic every target here comes from</i>	42
The method sheet — <i>every method in the volume, on one spread</i>	42
The traps, and the line that kills each — <i>ranked by how often this volume sets them</i>	43
One set, sat whole, against the clock — <i>the only honest measurement in this book</i>	45
The ninety seconds before the first option — <i>the reading, narrated, on this volume's own passage</i>	46
How to review a question you got wrong — <i>four minutes that decide whether the book works</i>	47
If you have a fortnight — <i>a fortnight, in order of return</i>	48
Five minutes, and no passage to hide behind — <i>rapid-fire recall on this volume's own signature skill</i>	49
What you should be able to do — <i>one line per concept, to mark off</i>	50
When you have finished this volume — <i>the two tests you set yourself</i>	50
Where this volume sits, and what comes next — <i>the series, by title</i>	51
Answer Key — <i>every letter; the reasoning lives in the Companion</i>	51

How this book works

Every idea in here opens with a question you have not been taught to answer. You will read it, you will pick an option, and there is a good chance you will pick the wrong one. That is the design. The explanation lands harder on a reader who has just been caught than on one who has been warned, and being caught here costs you nothing.

THE SUPPORT FADES. Under each concept the first walkthrough does all four steps out loud — names the task, prephrases an answer, puts every option on trial, then proves the survivor from a line in the passage. The second hands you the options to judge. The third hands you the prephrase as well. By the fifth you are running the whole method and I give you the answer and one line of proof, nothing more.

THREE LEVELS, MARKED HONESTLY. Every question carries L1, L2 or L3. L1 is a short stimulus with one clean trap. L2 is the length the paper actually sets. L3 is exam-hard — the conclusion is buried, two options survive the first pass, and one of them is wrong for a reason you have to go back to the passage to find. Nothing is mislabelled to flatter you.

THE TRAP. Each concept takes one wrong option and treats it seriously: why it attracts, which family of trap it belongs to, and the one line in the passage that kills it. Learn these. In this section the difference between a good score and a top one is almost entirely the ability to reject a tempting answer, and you cannot reject what you cannot name.

WHERE THE REASONING IS. The key at the back of this book gives you letters only. Everything else — why the answer is proved, and why each of the other three fails — is in the Solutions Companion. That is deliberate. In this subject the three wrong answers teach you more than the right one, and I did not want that material reduced to a letter in a grid.

WHERE THIS VOLUME SITS. The volume before this one attacked an argument from outside, with a fact the author had not accounted for. This one attacks it from inside, with a name. Every flawed argument on the paper commits a move that has been committed a thousand times before and has a label — it argues in a circle, it goes after the person instead of the point, it reads a sequence as a cause, it decides that what is true of the parts must be true of the whole. Learn the labels and the questions get quicker. There is one catch, and the whole volume turns on it: an option can describe a real error correctly and still be describing one THIS argument never made.

WHAT IT IS NOT. It is not a list of tricks for spotting answers without reading. Those exist, they work on easy questions, and they fail on exactly the questions that decide your rank. Every method here sends you back to the passage, because the passage is the only thing that can prove an answer.

ONE HONEST WARNING. This section is about a fifth of the paper — roughly double the weight of Quantitative — and it is the most learnable fifth, because it asks you to memorise nothing. What it asks instead is that you be willing to refuse an answer that is true. Every question in here prints three wrong options a careful reader can defend, and in this section marks go to those far more often than to a question that was genuinely hard. The clock does the rest. Accuracy and speed are the two things this book is for; there is no third.

CHAPTER 2

The Flaws That Have Names

Flaw questions are a standing feature of the reasoning sets, and in a typical CLAT paper they account for something in the region of a fifth to a quarter of the critical-reasoning items you will meet. They are also among the cheapest marks in the section once the habit is in place, because the answer is already printed in the stimulus and nothing has to be imagined. What costs candidates here is not difficulty but drift: reaching for a fallacy they recognise instead of the one in front of them.

BEFORE YOU READ ANYTHING ELSE – TRY THIS

Pellworth Books has told its board that it will not renew the contract of the freelance proofreading agency it has used for six years. The head of production put the case briefly. The agency's own director has twice published essays attacking Pellworth's editorial standards, and a supplier who thinks so little of the house cannot be trusted to work carefully on its books.

The board's papers record, on a separate page, that the agency's error rate across last year's forty titles was the lowest of any supplier Pellworth engaged.

The head of production's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism on the ground that it

- (A) treats a supplier's published opinion of the house as evidence about the quality of that supplier's work
- (B) presumes that a low error rate is the only measure by which careful work can be judged
- (C) concludes that the agency will be careless in future from the fact that it has been careless before
- (D) assumes that the house must either renew this contract or go without proofreading altogether

Answer A

You went looking for the error and found three of them, which is exactly what the item wanted. The error-rate line is sitting right there on the page, so an option that talks about error rates feels like the one engaging with the evidence. It is not. Nothing in the head of production's case mentions an error rate, so nothing in it can be criticised for over-relying on one. You were reading the options for a fallacy you recognised instead of reading them against the argument you actually had.

Every option on a Flaw item is a competent description of a real error. Only one of them describes an error this author committed. So the work is not recognition, it is matching: take each option back to the stimulus and try to put a finger on the sentence where the author does what the option says. The head of production says one thing only — the agency's director dislikes us, therefore the agency's work cannot be trusted. That is the person offered in place of the work. No line, no option; and here exactly one option has a line.

THE WAY OUT, IN FOUR LINES

Name the task

Flaw. Not what is wrong with the decision — what is wrong with the reasoning offered for it.

Say what the author actually did

He answered a question about the agency's WORK by describing the agency director's OPINION of Pellworth. That is the whole argument, and it is one move.

Point at the sentence, or refuse the option

Nobody says a low error rate is the only measure. Nobody argues from past carelessness. Nobody offers two courses as the only two. Three real errors, none of them on this page.

Take the one you can put a finger on

A supplier's published opinion of the house, treated as evidence about that supplier's work. The sentence is there, and the board's own papers give the error rate he never mentions.

Every option describes a real error. One of them describes this one.

2.1 Naming the move: the flaw has to be the one the argument commits

A Flaw stem does not ask what would damage the argument if it were true. It asks what the author has already done wrong, and it asks you to choose the sentence that describes it. Everything you need is on the page; nothing arrives from outside.

That sounds easier than an attack question, and for most readers it is harder, because of how the wrong options are built. On a properly set Flaw item an option can name a real error of reasoning, and name it correctly, and still not be the answer. Circular reasoning is a real error. Taking a correlation for a cause is a real error. Carrying a property from the parts to the whole is a real error. Three of the four describe errors this author never made. They are wrong for that reason alone — not because the description is bad, but because it describes somebody else's argument.

So the question is never 'is this a fallacy?' It is 'can I point at the line where this author does it?' Take the option back to the passage and put a finger on the sentence. If there is no sentence, the option is out, however famous the fallacy it names and however confidently it is worded.

Each describes a real error. One describes THIS one.

Every title Marchmont has shortlisted for the prize has sold well. So a shortlisting is what makes a book sell.

	The option says the argument...	Does it?
A	takes a correlation for a cause	yes — that is the move
B	argues in a circle	no — the premise is not the conclusion
C	attacks the person rather than the claim	no — nobody is criticised
D	uses a key term in two senses	no — 'sold well' holds still

Options B, C and D are correct descriptions of real errors of reasoning. A reader who recognises the fallacy, agrees the description is a good one, and never goes back to the passage will take one of them. That is the commonest wrong answer in this chapter.

So the test is not "is this a real flaw?" It is "point at the sentence where the author commits it." If your finger has nowhere to land, the option is out, however true it is about arguments in general.

The boxed cell is the only one about this argument. The other three are about arguments somebody else made.

THE METHOD

ASIDES & TRAPS

Read the stem first

A Flaw stem asks what the author did, not what would hurt the conclusion.

Nothing enters from outside the passage.

Split evidence from conclusion

Mark the sentence being established, then the sentences offered in support of it.

Say the move first

Before reading options, state in one sentence how the evidence was turned into the conclusion.

Point at the line	For each option, put a finger on the sentence where the author commits it.	<i>No line, no option.</i>
Fitting beats famous	A celebrated fallacy named accurately still loses to a plain description that fits.	

Ex 1*worked through*

Every title the Marchmont Prize has placed on its shortlist in the past decade has gone on to sell more than twenty thousand copies. Novels of comparable length from the same imprints, left off the list, have rarely passed five thousand. The prize's administrator draws what she calls the obvious lesson. A place on the Marchmont shortlist, she says, is what makes a literary novel sell.

The administrator's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism on the ground that it

- (A) attacks the imprints whose novels were left off the list rather than the novels themselves
- (B) assumes as a premise the very claim about the prize that it sets out to establish
- (C) records that shortlisting and strong sales occur together, and takes one to have produced the other
- (D) treats what holds of every title on the shortlist as holding of the shortlist as a whole

THE TASK Flaw — name the error the argument actually makes.

PREPHRASE The judges may be picking books that were always going to sell. Shortlisting and strong sales go together; she has made one of them produce the other.

EVERY OPTION ON TRIAL

- (A) No imprint's character is impugned anywhere. The imprints appear only as the comparison group. A real fallacy, correctly described, and not this author's.
- (B) Circular reasoning is a real error, but nothing here restates the conclusion as a premise: the sales figures stand independently of the claim about the prize.
- (C) The evidence is that shortlisting and strong sales occur together; the conclusion is that one produces the other. That step is the whole of the argument.
- (D) Composition is a real error and this argument does not make it: no property of individual titles is transferred to the list considered as one thing.

PROVED BY A place on the Marchmont shortlist, she says, is what makes a literary novel sell.

Answer C

Four options, four real fallacies, one line in the passage. That is the shape of every item in this chapter.

Ex 2*you put the options on trial*

Redgate Books moved its entire paperback list to a heavier cover board in January. Returns from bookshops fell by a fifth over the following six months.

The production manager's report to the board is unambiguous: the heavier board is what cut the returns, and the same board should now be specified for the hardback list.

The report does not mention that Redgate stopped supplying two chains in February, chains that had been returning nearly half of everything they took.

Which one of the following describes an error in the reasoning of the report?

- (A) It records the size of the fall in returns across the six months following the change
- (B) It assumes that a change coming before a fall must be the thing that produced it
- (C) It treats the two chains' returns as though they had been the whole of the paperback list's returns
- (D) It attacks the bookshops rather than the return figures those shops reported

THE TASK Flaw — name the error the argument actually makes.

PREPHRASE Two things changed in the same window. He has credited the one he chose and never mentioned the one that walked in behind it.

Answer _____

Ex 3*you prephrase, then judge*

Norbury House commissions a translation only when it judges a book translatable. Asked how that judgement is made, the rights director explains that a book is translatable when it can be translated well, and that the house therefore

commissions the books that can be translated well.

He adds that the test has never once failed, since every book the house has commissioned has turned out to be a book that could be translated well.

The rights director's account is open to criticism on the ground that it

- (A) records that every book Norbury has commissioned proved translatable in the event
- (B) relies on the say-so of an officer who would be embarrassed by any other answer
- (C) generalises from one house's commissioning record to the practice of the trade at large
- (D) settles the question it was asked by repeating the term it was asked to explain

THE TASK Flaw — name the error the argument actually makes.

Answer _____

Ex 4

on your own

Oreham Books is deciding whether to keep its poetry list. The editorial director argues that it must. More copies of poetry were sold across the trade last year than in any year of the preceding decade, and a category selling on that scale cannot be the wrong one for a house to stay in.

Oreham's own poetry titles sold four hundred copies between them last year, against a break-even of two thousand a title.

The editorial director's argument is most vulnerable to criticism because it

- (A) rests on a claim that a category cannot both grow across the trade and shrink at one house
- (B) states the number of copies of poetry sold across the trade in the year just ended
- (C) treats the sheer size of a sales figure as settling whether a decision is the right one
- (D) concludes that poetry sold well because Oreham kept publishing it, rather than the reverse

Answer _____

Ex 5

on your own

Meridian Editions has announced two things in the same letter to booksellers. First, that from January it will publish no book that has not been through two independent proofreading passes. Second, that its new fortnightly series of short reissues will go to press within four days of delivery, a schedule the letter itself concedes leaves room for a single pass only.

The letter closes by promising that every Meridian title from January will meet the two-pass standard.

The reasoning in the letter is most vulnerable to criticism because

- (A) it announces a fortnightly schedule for the new series of short reissues
- (B) it offers no evidence that two proofreading passes catch more errors than one
- (C) it treats a promise made to booksellers as though it were a promise made to authors
- (D) the commitments it makes cannot all of them be kept at once

Answer _____

SPOT THE TRAP

Rushmere Books declined to take on a first collection of stories. The commissioning editor's note gives the reason: the agent who submitted it has placed only two books in four years, and an agent with that record cannot be relied on to know what is worth publishing.

The note goes on to record that the collection was read by two of Rushmere's editors and that both recommended it.

The commissioning editor's reasoning is flawed because it

- (A) concludes that the collection will not sell from the fact that it has not sold before
- (B) judges the submission by the record of the person who sent it rather than on its own terms
- (C) assumes that a book recommended by two editors must be worth publishing
- (D) treats the number of books an agent has placed as a measure of that agent's ability

A strong student picked (D), and it is wrong. Work out what is wrong with it before you turn to the adjudication — naming the trap yourself is the whole exercise.

Why it seduces: The two-books-in-four-years line is the most concrete sentence in the passage, and the option that talks about it feels like the one doing the close reading. It is also true that placing two books is a thin measure of an agent. So the option is a fair criticism of something — just not the criticism the stem asked for, and not the step that carries the argument.

DRILL 2.1 – NAMING THE MOVE: THE FLAW HAS TO BE THE ONE THE ARGUMENT COMMITS

18 questions

Quillon Press sets the first printing of every debut novel at three thousand copies. Asked in a trade interview to justify the figure, the sales director said that three thousand is the correct run for a debut because three thousand is the run a debut ought to have. Pressed, he added that a house printing any other number would be printing the wrong number, since the right number for a debut novel is three thousand copies.

1. [1] The sales director's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism on the ground that it

- (A) reports the figure that the house has applied to every one of its debut novels
- (B) relies on the judgement of a person whose own pay depends on the answer he gives
- (C) assumes that the figure is correct in the very argument offered to establish it
- (D) assumes a printing must either sell out or else leave returns behind

Every one of the eleven novels Pallant and Co has sold into three or more foreign markets was published first in hardback, and the house has sold no paperback original abroad at all. The rights manager tells the sales conference that hardback publication is therefore what opens foreign markets to a novel, and recommends that the four paperback originals on next year's list be moved to hardback so that they have the same chance. Pallant's hardback and paperback lists are commissioned by the same three editors.

2. [1] The rights manager's reasoning is questionable because it

- (A) assumes that a foreign publisher will pay more for a hardback than for a paperback
- (B) attacks the editors who chose to publish four of next year's titles as paperback originals
- (C) treats two things that have always gone together as one of them producing the other
- (D) supposes that what holds of the eleven novels together holds of each one of them

Redgate Books cut the trade discount it offers independent bookshops in March. Orders from those shops fell steadily through the summer and were a third below the previous year by August. The sales director's paper concludes that the discount cut drove the shops away, and asks the board to restore the old rate at once.

The paper does not mention that Redgate's warehouse moved in April and that deliveries to every account ran three weeks late from then until August.

3. [1] The sales director's paper is open to criticism because it

- (A) attributes to one change a fall that a second change from the same months might equally explain
- (B) treats the shops' orders as though they were the shops' sales to the public
- (C) rejects the shops' own account of why they ordered less rather than answering it
- (D) takes the fall in orders to have brought about the cut in the trade discount

Mossbank Bookshop will not stock the new translation series from Oreham Books. The buyer's note explains that Oreham's publisher spent two years running a rival shop three doors along the same street and closed it owing money to three local suppliers. A publisher who managed a shop that badly, the note says, cannot be producing translations worth Mossbank's shelf space, whatever the trade reviews have said. Mossbank has stocked every other translation series published in the past two years.

4. [L1] The buyer's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism because it
- (A) attacks the publisher's conduct of a nearby shop rather than the books he now offers
 - (B) records that the rival shop closed owing money to three local suppliers
 - (C) generalises about every translation series in the trade from the record of a single publishing house
 - (D) assumes that shelf space at Mossbank is scarcer than shelf space in other shops

Northgate Books is choosing between two proofreading suppliers. The production controller recommends the larger one on a single ground: it handles more titles in a year than any other supplier in the country, and a firm that much of the trade has chosen cannot be the weaker option.

The smaller supplier returned fewer uncorrected errors on each of the six titles both firms have worked on for Northgate. Both firms have been proofreading for the trade for over a decade.

5. [L1] The production controller's recommendation is flawed because it
- (A) assumes that the six titles both firms worked on are representative of Northgate's whole list
 - (B) takes how widely a supplier has been chosen to settle how good its work is
 - (C) treats the count of uncorrected errors as the only measure that could matter here
 - (D) makes a leap from the smaller supplier's lighter workload to the lower price it charges

Ravenshill Press wrote to the eleven hundred bookshops on its account list, inviting any that wished to reply to say whether they would stock a hardback poetry list. Of the two hundred and forty shops that answered, four in five said they would. The sales director reports that the trade will stock hardback poetry and has ordered the printing on that basis. The letter did not say what the hardbacks would cost, and no shop was asked twice.

6. [L1] The sales director's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism on the ground that it
- (A) reads a shop's willingness to stock the hardback list as a willingness to display it
 - (B) takes the shops that chose to answer to speak for the whole list
 - (C) concludes that hardback poetry earns a better margin than paperback poetry
 - (D) reports that four in five of the shops which answered said they would stock

Rookwood Editions promises every author a fair advance. The contracts director explains to the board that a fair advance is one the house can afford without cutting titles from its list, and reports that all forty advances paid last year were fair by that measure. She then tells the authors' association that Rookwood pays fair advances in the sense the association means: advances matching what an author's book is likely to earn in its first two years.

7. [L1] The contracts director's reasoning is open to criticism because it
- (A) attacks the authors' association instead of answering the question that it asked
 - (B) assumes that a single expression keeps one meaning across the two halves of the case
 - (C) treats the forty advances paid in one year as a sample of the house's whole history
 - (D) supposes that an advance the house can afford is one the author will accept

The chair of the Orlingford Literary Prize was asked why the prize excludes translations. Her answer was that the prize exists to reward original writing, and that a translation is not original writing because it is a translation.

A panel member replied that several of last year's translations were more inventive than the novels the prize did consider, and asked for the rule to be reopened. The chair said the panel member was new to the panel and would come to see it.

8. [L2] The chair's reasoning is flawed because it
- (A) assumes the point at issue while purporting to explain the exclusion
 - (B) dismisses the panel member as new, and treats that dismissal as settling what original writing is
 - (C) credits the panel member with the view that no translation is inventive
 - (D) records that the Orlingford Prize does not consider translations for its award

Meridian Editions has told booksellers three things in one letter. Its new reissue line will be priced below every comparable paperback in the shops. Every title in the line will carry the sewn binding and the heavy paper the house uses on its literary hardbacks, which the letter says cost more to make than any paperback in the shops is sold for. And no Meridian title has ever been produced below cost, the letter adds, nor will any title ever be produced below cost in future. Booksellers are asked to order the line by the end of the month.

9. [L2] Which one of the following describes an error in the letter's reasoning?
- (A) It gives three undertakings about the new line which cannot all of them be honoured at once
 - (B) It assumes that booksellers care more about a book's binding than about the price they pay
 - (C) It generalises from the new reissue line to every title the house has ever issued
 - (D) It treats what holds of the literary hardbacks as holding of every reissue in the line

Nettlefold Books must decide what to do with its backlist warehouse. The managing director puts it plainly to the board: either the house pulps the eleven thousand slow-moving copies now, or it keeps paying storage until the money set aside for next year's list has gone. He asks for the pulping order to be signed at this meeting.

A sales note in the same set of papers records that two wholesalers have offered to buy the stock outright.

10. [L2] The managing director's reasoning is questionable because it

- (A) takes the offers made by the two wholesalers to be serious ones that could safely be relied on
- (B) sets out what storing eleven thousand slow-moving copies will cost the house next year
- (C) concludes that stock which has moved slowly must therefore be worth nothing at all
- (D) presents two courses as the only ones open when the board's own papers name a third

Quarrow Press reprinted its poetry titles in short runs of five hundred through the 1990s and made money on almost every one of them. The production director argues that short runs are therefore the way to reprint poetry today, and has ordered five hundred copies of each of next year's eight reprints.

Short-run unit costs have roughly doubled against offset since the 1990s, a change the director's own paper acknowledges in a footnote and does not answer.

11. [L2] The production director's argument is open to criticism because it

- (A) holds costs steady across a period its own footnote says they moved
- (B) assumes the poetry reprinted in the 1990s was the same length as next year's eight titles
- (C) orders five hundred copies of each of the eight reprints scheduled for next year
- (D) takes a reprint that made money to have been a reprint priced correctly

Penhallow Books put a single question to the three hundred authors on its list: would you rather be paid a higher royalty on every copy, or accept the present rate and let the house go on spending on the covers you have so often praised? Two hundred and seventy-three authors answered, and ninety-one per cent of them chose the present rate. The rights director now reports that Penhallow's authors do not want a higher royalty.

12. [L2] The rights director's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism because it

- (A) rests on a question worded so that one of its answers was made unattractive
- (B) reads a share of the authors who replied as a count of the authors on the list
- (C) assumes that the authors who answered said what they in fact believed
- (D) meets a case made about royalties by faulting the authors for caring about their covers instead

A trade columnist writes that the Marchmont Prize is the only literary award worth entering, because the awards worth entering are those with a genuine effect on sales, and Marchmont is the award with a genuine effect on sales. Asked in a letter which other awards she had examined, she names none, and answers that Marchmont's effect on sales is precisely what makes it the one award worth entering. The letter came from an administrator of a prize the column never mentioned.

13. [L2] The columnist's reasoning is flawed because it

- (A) reports that the Marchmont Prize has a genuine effect on the sales of the books it lists
- (B) takes entering an award to be the same thing as being shortlisted for it
- (C) assumes that its conclusion is true and then offers that very assumption as one of its premises
- (D) shows that no award other than Marchmont has ever moved the sales of any book at all

Oreham Books moved its whole audio list onto a new narration contract in April. Listening hours across the list rose by half over the two quarters that followed, and the audio manager's report tells the board that the new narrators are what lifted the figures.

The same report notes, without comment, that from the middle of May Oreham began giving the audio edition away free with every hardback it sold. Hardback sales themselves were flat across both quarters.

14. [L2] The audio manager's report is most vulnerable to criticism on the ground that it

- (A) records that two changes arrived in the same window and settles on one without disposing of the other
- (B) takes the rise in listening hours to be what prompted the new narration contract
- (C) assumes that those buying hardbacks and those listening are two separate groups
- (D) assumes that a change of narrator is the only thing that could ever move listening hours

Nettlefold Books has been commissioning translations for thirty years, and the translated list has returned a profit in twenty-eight of them. Eleven individual translations in that period lost money, four of them heavily. The rights director tells a colleague joining the department that she may therefore commission any translation she likes from the languages the house already works in, since the translation programme is a profitable one and whatever she commissions will form part of it.

15. [L3] The rights director's advice is open to criticism because it

- (A) hands a property of the programme down to each commission taken singly
- (B) supposes that a programme profitable for thirty years is certain to remain profitable
- (C) assumes the colleague will choose from the languages the house already works in
- (D) notes that the programme has been profitable, and concludes that no commission in it has lost money

Rookwood Editions is being pressed by the authors' association to raise its standard royalty. The publisher's reply is that Rookwood employs forty-one people, that eleven of them have worked at the house for more than twenty years, and that nobody who has read the letters those staff receive from authors each Christmas could ask them to bear the cost of a higher rate.

The association had argued entirely from earnings per copy sold. The reply gives no figure for earnings per copy.

16. [L3] The publisher's reply is flawed because it

- (A) rests on a supposition that a higher royalty would be paid for out of the staff's wages
- (B) answers a claim about rates of pay by inviting feeling for the staff instead
- (C) fails to answer the association's finding that earnings per copy have fallen
- (D) treats forty-one employees as a large number for a house this size

Pellworth Books gives its front display table each week to whichever titles the shop's buyers expect to sell fastest. Titles on that table outsell the rest of the shop by a wide margin in every week the shop has measured. No title has ever reached the table without the buyers' expectation behind it.

The manager concludes that the table is what produces the sales, and proposes putting the eight slowest-moving titles on it next month in order to lift them.

17. [L3] The manager's reasoning is most vulnerable to criticism on the ground that it

- (A) attacks the buyers' judgement rather than the sales figures they are working from
- (B) records that the titles on the front table outsell the rest of the shop in every week
- (C) reverses a relationship the passage states, and treats that reversal as the buyers' own claim
- (D) concludes that the front table causes the sales the passage says already decide the placing

Merrowdale Books tells its authors that its editors are independent. The editorial director explains that independence here means no editor is ever told what to acquire, and that on this measure every Merrowdale editor is independent and has been for years.

At the board meeting the same afternoon she assures the directors that Merrowdale's editors are independent in the sense the board wants: not one of them will acquire a book the board would rather was not acquired.

18. [L3] The editorial director's assurance is questionable because it

- (A) assumes an editor never told what to acquire will always acquire wisely
- (B) concludes that the editors are independent on the ground that Merrowdale has said they are
- (C) lets one word stand for two different things across the halves of her case
- (D) attributes to the board a demand for editorial control the board never made

2.2 The circle, the source and the three appeals

Four moves in this section share one feature: not one of them touches the claim. A circular argument never leaves the claim, it walks round it and arrives back. A source argument leaves the claim entirely and goes after the person who made it. An appeal to authority, to numbers or to feeling puts something the reader already trusts where the reason ought to have been.

Circular reasoning is the easiest of these to describe and the hardest to find, because the two sentences are almost never identical. One is the other with the nouns changed, or with a because dropped between two halves of a single thought. Ask what would make the premise worth stating at all; if the honest answer is the conclusion, the circle has closed.

The source argument is easier to see and far easier to over-report. An argument that mentions a person's interest is not thereby flawed. It is flawed when the interest is what carries the weight. A paper may note that a director stands to gain and still argue from figures, and an option accusing it of the attack has nothing to point at.

The same restraint governs the appeals. An expert quoted inside their own field is evidence, not a fallacy.

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