Exercise walk-through

9.1

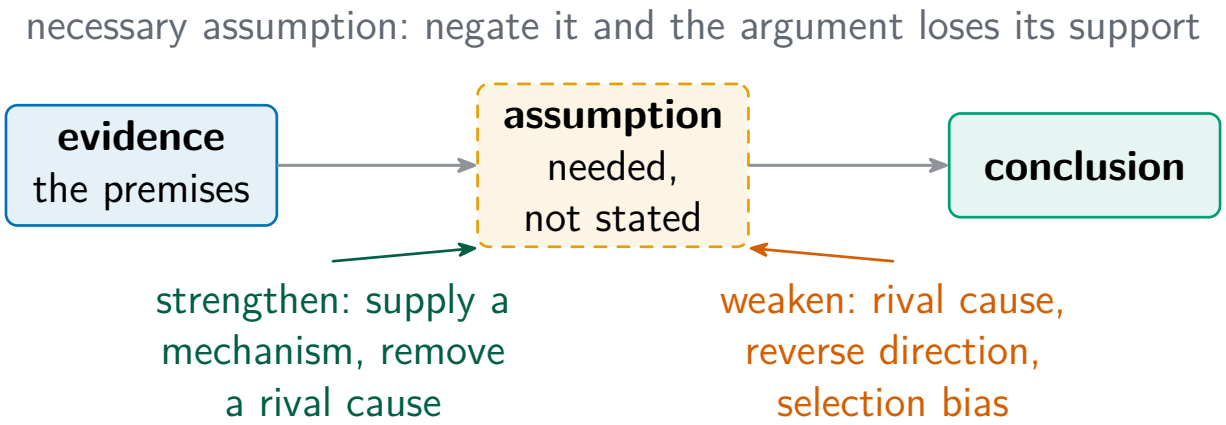
Verbal arguments: assumptions, alternative causes and evidence direction

GRE · GRE · GRE General Test

Verbal Arguments: Assumptions, Alternative Causes and the Direction of Evidence

- Find the evidence, the conclusion and the missing link between them.
- Identify a **necessary assumption** : one the argument cannot work without.
- Recognise alternative causes, including **self-selection** into groups.
- Decide whether new information strengthens, weakens or does not affect an argument.

Figure: The structure of an argument



- Strengthen and weaken by acting on the missing bridge.
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Independent transfer

- An organiser argues: “A guide will prevent all registration errors because every applicant can read it.” State a necessary assumption about accessibility, test its negation and distinguish it from the stronger claim that everyone actually reads the guide.
- Propose evidence that would strengthen the recommendation without proving “all”.
- A necessary accessibility bridge is that no applicant is unable to understand the guide’s relevant instructions.
- Negating it gives at least one applicant unable to understand them; the universal prevention argument loses its stated support.

Exercise 2.1

2.1 Original argument: “Participants who chose an optional planning session finished their projects earlier. Therefore the session caused faster completion.” Which most weakens the inference? A. Participants already completed previous projects earlier than nonparticipants. B. The room was recently painted. C. The session used printed notes. D. Many participants liked the session.

premise

premise

conclusion

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2.1 A. A pre-existing completion difference supplies a self-selection explanation. B and C have no stated connection to the outcome; D measures satisfaction rather than causal effect. A does not prove the session had no effect. It weakens the inference that the observed group difference establishes the claimed cause.

Exercise 3.1

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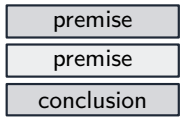
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Exercise 3.1

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3.1 A necessary accessibility bridge is that no applicant is unable to understand the guide’s relevant instructions. Negating it gives at least one applicant unable to understand them; the universal prevention argument loses its stated support. Accessibility is weaker than actual reading, and neither alone guarantees that every action is performed correctly. A comparison showing fewer errors among comparable applicants using the guide would strengthen an effectiveness claim, while still not proving zero errors for every applicant. Other necessary assumptions, such as instructions covering the possible errors, are valid when their negation is tied to the exact universal claim.

Local review checklist: follow every response instruction; support the answer with the stated evidence; explain rejected alternatives or an opposing view; check scope, restrictions and clarity. For writing, this is a formative checklist, not an official rubric score.