Verbal: reading and argument structure

GRE General Test

Scope and task

Original classroom practice within the reviewed shorter-test task types. This does not simulate an adaptive test or predict a scaled or writing score.

- Analyse discourse and draw conclusions
- Distinguish assumptions, evidence and author perspective
- Select relevant points and understand text organisation

assumption : An unstated premise needed by an argument.

discourse : Connected language with structure and meaning.

Read the evidence and choose a method

Reading comprehension includes single-answer, select-one-or-more and sentence-selection tasks. Follow each instruction exactly.

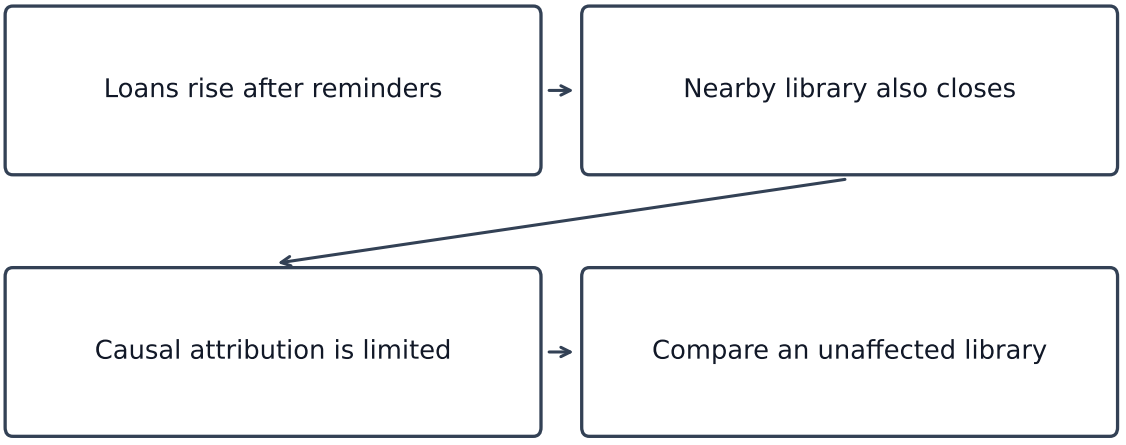
Identify the conclusion separately from observations. An assumption is an unstated bridge the argument needs.

For select-all tasks, test each option independently. One correct option does not make the others false.

An author can describe a theory before challenging it. Track whose position each sentence reports.

Worked reasoning

Sales rose after advertising increased. “Advertising caused the rise” assumes no sufficient alternative explanation, such as a price reduction. A passage that only reports the timing supports an association, not that causal conclusion.



Timing alone cannot single out the reminders: a rival change needs a comparison

Conditions and common errors

Graduate verbal tasks reward precise scope. Avoid an answer whose always or only overstates the passage.

Original application

Original passage: [1] A town library's loans rose after it began sending reminders. [2] During the same month, a nearby library closed for repairs. [3] The increase therefore does not establish that reminders alone caused more borrowing. [4] A comparison with an otherwise similar library unaffected by closure would help assess that claim.

What is the main purpose? A. Prove reminders never work. B. Limit a causal inference and suggest a comparison. C. Show repairs reduce reading. D. Recommend closing libraries.

■ Model and reasoning

B. Sentence 3 limits the inference from the observed timing; sentence 4 proposes evidence. A overstates uncertainty as proof of no effect. C changes the outcome from loans to reading and is not established. D turns a reported closure into a recommendation. The author accepts the rise in loans while questioning its explanation.

Independent transfer

For the same passage, select every supported statement: A. Loans increased. B. Reminders caused none of the increase. C. Another change may help explain the increase. Then select the sentence that proposes a way to distinguish explanations.

■ **Check after attempting**

A and C; sentence 4. A is stated in sentence 1. C follows from the competing event in sentence 2 and caution in sentence 3. B is unsupported: failure to establish an exclusive cause does not establish zero contribution. Sentence 2 provides a competing observation; sentence 4 proposes a comparison. Judge each option independently and select the complete requested sentence.