Complete a passage with a warranted inference

Original skill preparation; versioned source scope

Completing a Passage with a Warranted Inference

- Complete a passage with the **inference 推断** that follows most logically.
- Choose a **warranted inference 有依据的推断**, one the **evidence 证据** in the passage supports.
- Keep any **qualification 限定** the passage includes, such as a small or unequal sample.

What makes an inference warranted

- It joins facts stated in the passage. It does not need outside knowledge.
- It keeps the passage's scope: the same groups, the same task, the same strength.
- It often sounds modest: "may", "in this case", "for some".

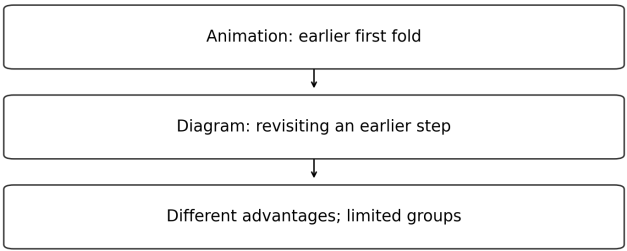
Testing the options

- For each option, ask: which sentences support it? If none, reject it.
- Reject options that turn a relative finding ("more often", "sooner") into an absolute one ("always", "never", "useless").
- Reject options that add a new cause, group or time.
- Read the sentence with the blank: the conclusion must fit its first words, such as "therefore" or "this suggests".

How limits change an inference

- Small groups, groups that may differ, or no random assignment weaken a general conclusion.
- A later study with different results weakens a general claim; it does not show the first study was false.

Figure: How limits change an inference



- Worked steps: Animation: earlier first fold → Diagram: revisiting an earlier step → Different advantages; limited groups
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Practice passage

- **Passage.** A workshop offered a printed diagram and an animated demonstration of a folding process.
- Participants using the animation began the first fold sooner on average.
- However, when asked to repair a mistake later, participants using the diagram more often returned to the correct earlier step without help.
- The groups were small, and the organisers did not report whether participants had equal experience.

Worked example: completing the conclusion

- Facts: animation users started sooner; diagram users more often fixed mistakes alone; groups were small and may have differed.
- Warranted inference: the animation may help people begin, while the diagram may help them go back to an earlier step, though the small groups limit this.
- This matches the organisers' own conclusion about the "stage of the task".

Worked example: rejecting overstatements

- "Animations prevent mistakes." Unsupported: the study measured fixing mistakes, not avoiding them.
- "Diagrams are useless for starting." Unsupported: diagram users started later on average, not never.
- If a new study with equal experience found equal correction rates, it would weaken a general claim that diagrams are better, and suggest experience may explain the first result.

Common errors

- Choosing an option that is true in real life but not supported by the passage.
- Turning "sooner" or "more often" into "always" or "never".
- Ignoring the limit stated in the passage.

Common errors (2)

- Adding a reason the passage never gives.
- Choosing a conclusion that does not fit the words before the blank.

Key terms

- **inference**: A conclusion drawn from information that is stated.
- **warranted inference**: An inference that the **evidence** actually supports.
- **evidence**: The facts in the passage that support a conclusion.
- **qualification**: A limit added to a claim to keep it accurate.

Check yourself

- A passage says students who slept more scored higher, in one class of 25. Is "Sleep raises scores for all students" warranted?
- Which word in an option should make you check the scope: "may" or "always"?
- A passage gives a finding and then "however, the sample was small." What should the right conclusion include?