

Notes: Inference- based questions



How to Approach Inference Based Questions

What is Inference?

An 'inference' is the act of drawing a conclusion on the basis of premises. As its name suggests, an 'inference to the best explanation' is an argument whose conclusion is endorsed because it is the best explanation of some given phenomena.

- Inference passages consist of statements from which one can derive deductions or conclusions.
- These questions require you to connect the statements.
- One type of inference question involves formal logic.
- In inference questions, you must recognise the passage's premises as true and focus on what can be construed from them.

The four most popular Logical Reasoning question types are **Assumption, Strengthen/Weaken, Flaw, and Inference**.

- In these, we are not looking for a missing piece, a flaw, or ways to make the conclusion stronger or weaker—we are looking for something additional that is suggested by the statements in the passage.
- We, as a student/candidates, must shift gears from evaluating the argument to seeing where the pieces of the argument lead.

Note:

- Inference lies in the grey area between a fact and a judgement.
- It is closer to a fact than a judgement.
- Inference can be defined as a conclusion based on facts.
- Since it is based on facts, it is more objective as compared to a judgement.
- It can be defined as a conclusion drawn about the unknown based on the known.

But what are these known and unknown that we are talking about?

Known: the fact that is required to prove a different proposition

Unknown: It is something that we can use while using the given fact as a premise.

Examples:

1. *If there is a tsunami, people will be killed.*
2. *The recent initiatives of networks and companies like AIDSCARE would lead to the availability of much-needed drugs to a larger number of people.*
3. *From the recent CSIR report, it can be seen that the Indian economy has grown in the last five years.*

Important: Inference is simply 'expectations or possibilities of something happening as a result of something else.'

[FACT + LOGICAL DEDUCTION = INFERENCE]



How to Attempt inference-based questions:

These question types appear in most critical reasoning-based questions and have stems that go like this:

1. The author of the passage suggests that
2. Which one of the following is implied by the argument above?
3. If all the statements above are true, which of the following must also be true?
4. The author would most likely agree with one of the following?
5. Does the passage provide the most support for which one of the following?
6. Which of the following is probably the conclusion towards which the author is moving?

★ Let's understand this particular concept of Critical Reasoning with the help of a relevant example:

Q1: Financial independence is generally equated with the empowerment of women folk. But it is not as simple as it sounds. A closer look at the ground realities shows that the improvement in the status of women in society is notional in most cases.

The author is most likely to agree with which one of the following statements?

- A. In today's world, almost all girls wish to go to work and do go to work.
- B. Women now work after an extensive education depending on the economic necessity of the family.
- C. Women have to fight and stress their cases to prove their merit among the men.
- D. Economic/Financial independence for women is as important as their family.
- E. Women relentlessly strive to create a harmonious environment around them.

Answer: C

Explanation:

The correct answer is option C. The author is concerned with the lack of improvement in the status of women in spite of financial independence among women.

- Option A suggests the opposite and explains that women wish to work and are able to accomplish their desire.
- Option B is not connected with the main idea because it elaborates on how and when women work.
- Option D expresses the view about economic independence but adds a new element to the family which is not mentioned in the paragraph.
- Option E presents an all-round view of women's efforts which is out of the scope of the present argument.

Important:

- While attempting inference questions, look at the main idea.
- The process of elimination that is used for assumption questions can also be used for inference questions.
- While negating choices, if nothing happens to the argument when you cancel out a choice, then that choice is probably incorrect.
- Inference questions contain very standard wrong choices (must keep in mind).

Pointers:

- There are tricky options that inappropriately distort the information contained in the passage because they employ the language of the passage but weave its ideas in a misleading fashion resulting in an incorrect option.
- There are also options that focus on issues that are not discussed in the passage and suggest things that can't be considered as per the passage.
- Some options take the passage's idea to the extreme.
- There are other options that oppose the passage and are highly implausible.



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