

Weaken

1. A linguist recently argued that all human languages must have a common origin because some concepts are universal; that is, they appear in all languages. For example, all languages are capable of describing lightness and darkness.
Which one of the following, if true, would most seriously weaken the argument?
- (A) The Bernese language does not contain basic nouns like *automobile* and *airplane*.
 - (B) No one linguist could possibly speak all known languages.
 - (C) All speakers regardless of their languages are confronted with similar stimuli like lightness and darkness.
 - (D) The similarity between human language and dolphin language has not been attributed to a common origin.
 - (E) Some languages include concepts of which speakers of other languages are not even aware.
2. The petrochemical industry claims that chemical waste dumps pose no threat to people living near them. If this is true, then why do they locate the plants in sparsely populated regions? By not locating the chemical dumps in densely populated areas the petrochemical industry tacitly admits that these chemicals are potentially dangerous to the people living nearby.
Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument?
- (A) Funding through the environmental Super Fund to clean up poorly run waste dumps is reserved for rural areas only.
 - (B) Until chemical dumps are proven 100% safe, it would be imprudent to locate them were they could potentially do the most harm.
 - (C) Locating the dumps in sparsely populated areas is less expensive and involves less government red tape.
 - (D) The potential for chemicals to leach into the water table has in the past been underestimated.
 - (E) People in cities are more likely to sue the industry if their health is harmed by the dumps.

3. Nature constantly adjusts the atmospheric carbon level. An increase in the level causes the atmosphere to hold more heat, which causes more water to evaporate from the oceans, which causes increased rain. Rain washes some carbon from the air into the oceans, where it eventually becomes part of the seabed. A decrease in atmospheric carbon causes the atmosphere to hold less heat, which causes decreased evaporation from the oceans, which causes less rain, and thus less carbon is washed into the oceans. Yet some environmentalists worry that burning fossil fuels may raise atmospheric carbon to a dangerous level. It is true that a sustained increase would threaten human life. But the environmentalists should relax—nature will continually adjust the carbon level. Which one of the following, if true, would most weaken the argument in the passage?
- (A) Plant life cannot survive without atmospheric carbon.
 - (B) It is not clear that breathing excess carbon in the atmosphere will have a negative effect on human life.
 - (C) Carbon is part of the chemical “blanket” that keeps the Earth warm enough to sustain human life.
 - (D) Breathing by animals releases almost 30 times as much carbon as does the burning of fossil fuels.
 - (E) The natural adjustment process, which occurs over millions of years, allows wide fluctuations in the carbon level in the short term.
4. Gasoline-powered boat engines manufactured in the a North American country prior to 1990 contribute significantly to the pollution found in

the world’s oceans. In 1990, however, the government imposed stricter pollution controls on gasoline engines manufactured for boats, and beginning in 1995, the government imposed a program of inspections for pre-1990 boat engines with increasingly rigorous pollution standards. As the older boat engines fail to pass inspection, boat owners are increasingly retiring their old engines in favor of newer, less-polluting boat engines. As a result, the amount of pollution these older boat engines emit into the world’s oceans will steadily decrease over the next ten years.

Which one of the following statements, if true, most seriously undermines the argument?

- (A) Water from the various oceans cannot be accurately divided among nations because ocean currents travel thousands of miles and cross numerous national boundary lines.
- (B) Even as they become older, boat engines manufactured after 1990 will never pollute as much as boat engines manufactured prior to 1990.
- (C) When boat owners retire their older boat engines in favor of newer ones, the older engines are frequently sent overseas to countries with less stringent pollution standards, where they are in high demand.
- (D) The government’s pollution control standards for boat engines are increasingly stricter up until 1998; then they level off.
- (E) If demand for new fishing and pleasure boats increases significantly every year, then pollution of the world’s oceans will continue to increase, regardless of the fact that older boat engines are being retired.

5. Pharmacists recently conducted a study with respect to the reasons their customers purchased eye drops to soothe eye dryness. Dry eyes were more frequently experienced by customers who wore contact lenses than by customers who did not wear contact lenses. The pharmacists concluded that wearing contact lenses, by itself, can cause contact wearers to have dry eyes. Which one of the following statements, if true, most seriously undermines the pharmacists' conclusion?

- (A) An inherited condition can cause both weak eyesight and dry eyes.
- (B) Physical exertion causes dry eyes in many people who wear contact lenses.
- (C) Most people who have dry eyes do not wear contact lenses.
- (D) Most people who wear contact lenses do not have dry eyes.
- (E) Both weak vision and dry eyes cause headaches.

6. It has been suggested that with the continued advance of technology, robots will be able to replace skilled craftsmen who currently assemble and test sophisticated manufactured goods, such as musical instruments. This suggestion is based on the belief that the assembly and testing of musical instruments consists of learning a series of techniques and processes, which can be programmed automatically without any understanding of how the various parts are supposed to work together to produce a high quality musical instrument. If this were the case, then robots could be programmed to follow the techniques and processes, and craftsmen would not be needed to assemble and test the instruments. But to do their jobs, skilled craftsmen must also understand the principles of sound

production, together with the nuances of tone quality and the other criteria of a high quality musical instrument. Therefore, the idea that robots will replace people in the production of musical instruments is seriously flawed. Which one of the following selections, if true, would most seriously weaken the author's conclusion that robots will not replace skilled craftsmen in the production of musical instruments?

- (A) Not as many musical instruments are being produced today, so the industry cannot afford to pay skilled craftsmen.
- (B) Musical instruments are not produced individually any more, but are mass produced in factories.
- (C) Robots can be programmed to understand the principles of sound production, the nuances of tone quality and the other criteria of a high quality musical instrument.
- (D) Robots can accomplish mundane assembly tasks much more cost-effectively than skilled craftsmen can.
- (E) Skilled craftsmen are responsible for ensuring that musical instruments meet high quality standards.

7. Scientists have studied the effects of electromagnetic fields associated with high voltage power lines upon people whose homes are located within 300 yards of the lines. They have compared the growth rate of children who live near the lines with the growth rate of children who live elsewhere. Because they found no significant differences in the growth rates in the two study areas, they have concluded that electromagnetic fields are harmless. Which one of the following, if true, would most seriously jeopardize the scientists' conclusion?

- (A) The scientists did not consider other possible impacts upon growth rates.
- (B) In studying people who lived near high voltage power lines, the scientists did not consider what type of housing those people lived in.
- (C) The growth rates of children have changed considerably since the 1920s.
- (D) People who live near electromagnetic fields suffer health problems that are not reflected in the growth rates of their children.
- (E) As children get older, their activities tend to occur away from home more often.

8. Thirty years ago, deer and elk in selected parts of the Rocky Mountains were first discovered with a condition known as wasting disease. In 1970, two percent of the deer and elk killed by hunters were diagnosed with the disease. In 1995, that percentage had grown to six percent. This increase in the incidence of the disease proves that wasting disease has become much more prevalent in the last twenty-five years.

If true, which one of the following selections most seriously weakens the author's conclusion?

- (A) Wasting disease has not been discovered in domestic livestock or in moose or bighorn sheep, which are also found in significant numbers in the Rocky Mountains.
- (B) Wasting disease tends to make deer and elk lethargic, making them more easily killed by hunters.
- (C) Since it was first reported, wasting disease has occasionally been diagnosed in deer outside the Rocky Mountains.
- (D) Hunters have grown more reluctant to cooperate with the authorities in reporting their deer and elk harvest, because if wasting disease is diagnosed in their harvest, the meat will be destroyed.
- (E) It is very difficult to diagnose wasting disease more than twenty-four hours after death, so many cases of the disease have gone undiagnosed.

9. Nutritionists have recommended that people eat more fiber. Advertisements for a new fiber-supplement pill state only that it contains "44 percent fiber."

The advertising claim is misleading in its selection of information on which to focus if which one of the following is true?

- (A) There are other products on the market that are advertised as providing fiber as a dietary supplement.
- (B) Nutritionists base their recommendation on medical findings that dietary fiber protects against some kinds of cancer.
- (C) It is possible to become addicted to some kinds of advertised pills, such as sleeping pills and painkillers.
- (D) The label of the advertised product recommends taking 3 pills every day.
- (E) The recommended daily intake of fiber is 20 to 30 grams, and the pill contains one-third gram.

10. In a suburban community in the Southeast, neighborhood security guards have their residents' permission to call local police if anyone is observed entering the home of a resident who is out of town. When residents leave town, they report their departure and return dates to the neighborhood security office. If guards observe someone entering the home of a resident who is out of town, they will immediately call the police. The residential burglary rate for that community has decreased since the implementation of this reporting procedure.

If it is true that the burglary rate has decreased in this community since the

reporting procedure was implemented, then which of the following would be most important to know to make sure the conclusion is valid?

- (A) Are residents who report their travel plans to the security office also taking other precautions to protect their homes while they are away?
- (B) How many other communities utilize this reporting procedure with their neighborhood security offices?
- (C) Will residents be harassed by security guards or the police if they return home early from their travels?
- (D) Is this community similar to other guarded suburban communities in the Southeast?
- (E) Are homes in this community sometimes burglarized even when residents are in town?

11. The high cost of production is severely limiting which operas are available to the public. These costs necessitate reliance on large corporate sponsors, who in return demand that only the most famous operas be produced. Determining which operas will be produced should rest only with ticket purchasers at the box office, not with large corporate sponsors. If we reduce production budgets so that operas can be supported exclusively by box-office receipts and donations from individuals, then the public will be able to see less famous operas.

Which one of the following, if true, would weaken the argument?

- (A) A few opera ticket purchasers go to the opera for the sake of going to the opera, not to see specific operatic productions.
- (B) The reduction of opera production budgets would not reduce the desire of large corporate sponsors to support operas.
- (C) Without the support of large corporate sponsors, opera companies could not afford to produce any but the most famous of operas.
- (D) Large corporate sponsors will stop supporting opera productions if they are denied control over which operas will be produced.
- (E) The combination of individual donations and box-office receipts cannot match the amounts of money obtained through sponsorship by large corporations.

12. In Brazil, side-by-side comparisons of Africanized honeybees and the native honeybees have shown that the Africanized bees are far superior honey producers. Therefore, there is no reason to fear that domestic commercial honey

production will decline in the United States if local honeybees are displaced by Africanized honeybees.

Each of the following, if true, would weaken the argument EXCEPT:

- (A) The honeybees native to Brazil are not of the same variety as those most frequently used in the commercial beekeeping industry in the United States.
- (B) Commercial honey production is far more complicated and expensive with Africanized honeybees than it is with the more docile honeybees common in the United States.
- (C) If Africanized honeybees replace local honeybees, certain types of ornamental trees will be less effectively pollinated.
- (D) In the United States a significant proportion of the commercial honey supply comes from hobby beekeepers, many of whom are likely to abandon beekeeping with the influx of Africanized bees.
- (E) The area of Brazil where the comparative study was done is far better suited to the foraging habits of the Africanized honeybees than are most areas of the United States.

13. The news media is often accused of being willing to do anything for ratings. However, recent action by a television network indicates that the news media is sometimes guided by moral principle. This network had discovered through polling voters on the east coast that the Republican candidate for President had garnered enough votes to ensure victory before the polls closed on the west coast. However, the network withheld this information until the polls on the west coast closed so that the information would not affect the outcome of key congressional races. Which one of the following most strengthens the argument?

- (A) The network had endorsed the Republican candidate for President.
- (B) The network expected its ratings to increase if it predicted the winner of the presidential race, and to decrease if it did not predict the winner.
- (C) A rival network did predict a winner of the presidential race before the polls on the west coast closed.
- (D) The network believed that it would receive higher ratings by not predicting the winner of the presidential race.
- (E) The network feared that predicting the winner of the presidential race could so anger Congress that it might enact legislation preventing all future polling outside of voting centers.

14. If the public library shared by the adjacent towns of Redville and Glenwood were relocated from the library's current, overcrowded building in central Redville to a larger, available building in central Glenwood, the

library would then be within walking distance of a larger number of library users. That is because there are many more people living in central Glenwood than in central Redville, and people generally will walk to the library only if it is located close to their homes.

Which one of the following, if true, most strengthens the argument?

- (A) The public library was located between Glenwood and Redville before being moved to its current location in central Redville.
- (B) The area covered by central Glenwood is approximately the same size as that covered by central Redville.
- (C) The building that is available in Glenwood is smaller than an alternative building that is available in Redville.
- (D) Many of the people who use the public library do not live in either Glenwood or Redville.
- (E) The distance that people currently walk to get to the library is farther than what is generally considered walking distance.

15. Participants at a continuing legal education seminar were asked to evaluate the seminar schedule, location and topic selection to determine whether changes would increase attendance at next year's seminar. A majority of the evaluations recommended that the seminar schedule be changed so that the sessions would be held from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. instead of the current 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule. Based upon the results of the evaluations, the sponsors of the seminar decided to change to an earlier schedule for next year's program.

Which of the following selections, if true, would most prove the sponsors right in their decision to change to an earlier schedule next year?

- (A) Approximately 85% of the people who received evaluation forms completed their forms and handed them in.
 - (B) Other seminar sponsors have made changes in their programs based on comments they have received in evaluation forms.
 - (C) About the same percentage of people attending the seminar wanted the earlier schedule as those who returned their evaluation forms.
 - (D) An earlier seminar schedule would make commuting easier for the participants.
 - (E) A significantly larger percentage of people who preferred the earlier schedule returned their evaluation forms than people who preferred the 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule.
16. A distemper virus has caused two-thirds of the seal population in the North Sea to die since May 1988. The explanation for the deaths cannot rest here, however. There must be a reason the normally latent virus could prevail so suddenly: clearly the severe pollution of the North

Sea waters must have weakened the immune system of the seals so that they could no longer withstand the virus.

Which one of the following, if true, most strongly supports the explanation given in the argument?

- (A) At various times during the last ten years, several species of shellfish and seabirds in the North Sea have experienced unprecedentedly steep drops in population.
- (B) By reducing pollution at its source, Northern Europe and Scandinavia have been taking the lead in preventing pollution from reaching the waters of the North Sea.
- (C) For many years, fish for human consumption have been taken from the waters of the North Sea.
- (D) There are two species of seal found throughout the North Sea area, the common seal and the gray seal.
- (E) The distemper caused by the virus was a disease that was new to the population of North Sea seals in May 1988, and so the seals' immune systems were unprepared to counter it.

17. *Advertisement:* Do you want to be more energetic, vigorous, and physically fit? Take a daily supplement of Vita-plus, a vitamin combination containing additional proprietary ingredients. Our studies using hundreds of volunteers show that after just one week of taking 2 capsules daily, participants report being more energetic and alert on average than the average level reported by the National Institutes of Health survey of all Americans.

volunteers reported no increase in alertness or energy.

Which of the following would most strengthen the advertisement's claim that Vita-Plus supplements make one more energetic and alert?

- (A) Those who voluntarily chose to take more than 2 capsules daily reported energy levels even greater than those who took only 2 capsules.
- (B) The volunteers were randomly selected from all those who answered a newspaper advertisement and were willing to pay for the cost of the Vita-Plus capsules.
- (C) At the beginning of the study, the volunteers' reports on alertness showed levels on average no different from the average level reported by the National Institutes of Health.
- (D) Some of the volunteers were given capsules that solely contained cellulose, an inert substance with no vitamins or other health-inducing substances. Those volunteers also reported increased levels of alertness and energy.
- (E) Some of the volunteers were given capsules that solely contained cellulose, an inert substance with no vitamins or other health-inducing substances. Those