

GRE Argument Essay Practice Test 1

1. In 1992, many farmers in Jalikistan began using a hormone designed to produce larger cows that would produce more milk. Since then, childhood obesity in Jalikistan has grown by 200 percent. The amount of milk and dairy consumed by children in this area has not increased or decreased. Children in the same area who are lactose intolerant, and who drink almond milk or soy milk, have not had the same increase in childhood obesity. The only clear explanation is that the introduction of the hormone is responsible for the increase in childhood obesity in that area.

Write a response in which you discuss one or more viable alternatives to the proposed explanation. Justify, with support, why the alternatives could rival the proposed explanation and explain how those explanation(s) can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.

2. Several charitable organizations in Pleasantville provide opportunities for teenagers to engage in community service. These organizations have a great need for volunteers, but in recent years, the number of teenage volunteers has significantly declined. The Pleasantville School Board should take measures to increase the number of volunteers. Teachers, parents, and other community members agree that it is important for young people to learn the value of community service. Requiring high-school students to engage in community service would provide much-needed assistance to worthy local charities and would also help young people understand the importance of giving back to their community. For this reason, the Pleasantville School Board should institute a program requiring students of Pleasantville High School to complete 40 hours of community service prior to graduation.

Write a response in which you discuss one or more viable alternatives to the proposed explanation. Justify, with support, why the alternatives could rival the proposed explanation and explain how those explanation(s) can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.

3. A recent survey of 250 adults between the ages of 30 and 45 showed an association between the number of hours adults spend online each day and self-reporting of symptoms commonly associated with depression. The survey found that adults who spend 30 hours or more online each week were twice as likely as others to report that they “frequently” had trouble concentrating. Of adults who reported spending more than 30 hours per week online, 20 percent also reported that they had felt “sad, down, or blue” at least three times within the past month.

These results suggest that spending too much time online is linked to depression and people who want to improve their well-being should strictly limit the time they spend online.

Write a response in which you discuss what questions would need to be answered in order to decide whether the recommendation and the argument on which it is based are reasonable. Be sure to explain how the answers to these questions would help to evaluate the recommendation.

4. “In order to save a considerable amount of money, Rockingham’s century-old town hall should be torn down and replaced by the larger and more energy-efficient building that some citizens have proposed. The old town hall is too small to comfortably accommodate the number of people who are employed by the town. In addition, it is very costly to heat the old hall in winter and cool it in summer. The new, larger building would be more energy efficient, costing less per square foot to heat and cool than the old hall. Furthermore, it would be possible to rent out some of the space in the new building, thereby generating income for the town of Rockingham.”

Write a response in which you discuss one or more viable alternatives to the proposed explanation. Justify, with support, why the alternatives could rival the proposed explanation and explain how those explanation(s) can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.

5. Claitown University needs both affordable housing for its students and a way to fund the building of such housing. The best solution to this problem is to commission a famous architect known for experimental and futuristic buildings. It is common knowledge that tourists are willing to pay money to tour some of the architect’s buildings, so it can be expected that tourists will want to visit this new building. The income from the fees charged to tourists will soon cover the building costs.

Furthermore, such a building will attract new students as well as donations from alumni. And even though such a building will be much larger than our current need for student housing, part of the building can be used as office space.

Write a response in which you discuss one or more viable alternatives to the proposed explanation. Justify, with support, why the alternatives could rival the proposed explanation and explain how those explanation(s) can plausibly account for the facts presented in the argument.